

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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Deepening crisis in
Ivory Coast p. 8Unexpected response to
war p. 16

58th year of publication

Fifty years of jubilee on the job: CLAC celebrates in Ontario



COURTESY CLAC

An archival CLAC photo, with Harry Antonides second from right.

Harry der Nederlanden

HAMILTON, Ont. — "Celebrating a jubilee can be dangerous as well as exciting," Calvin Seerveld told a large audience that came together from across Ontario at Hamilton Christian High Oct. 26, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

"According to the Bible, the Year of Jubilee is not so much chronological — 49 and out! — as God-almighty doxological!" Seerveld continued. That is, it's not an excuse for us to congratulate ourselves and coast, but a time to renew our connection with the Source of all power and all good.

Seerveld gave the keynote address, "Jubilee on the Job," after several "old-timers" like Gerald Vandezande and Harry Antonides reminisced about small beginnings hugely blessed by God, and representatives from several sister organizations made short and not-so-short — speeches of congratulation.

Some 50 years ago the CLAC was little more than a sense of calling in the hearts and minds of small enclaves of recent immigrants working in strange surroundings in a new country. Six years after it was organized, the fledgling organization was told it

could not include in its constitution a reference to biblical principles. And there was even a split on the issue. Another time, the Ontario Labor Relations Board ruled that the CLAC discriminated against non-Christian members and so could not be accredited. It looked like there was no future in Canada for a Christian labor movement.

Today, however, the CLAC has a staff of 100 working out of six regional offices and represents about 28,000 employees.

Surviving and flourishing

What did this minuscule organization have going for it that enabled it to survive and eventually to even flourish, asked Harry Antonides. He listed a number of things, among them:

The founding members grew up with a worldview that did not permit a split into the sacred and the secular, so they were convinced that work, too, is part of our service to God.

They also believed that a free society should allow people to choose whether to belong to a secular or to a Christian union.

Mentors like Evan Runner, Bernard Zylstra and Calvin Seerveld provided a theoretical rationale and great encouragement to the young immigrant community.

Gerald Vandezande, said Antonides, took on the leadership role of the CLAC at a crucial time and invested it with tremendous energy and organizational skill.

Antonides quoted the words of Ed VanderKloet, who served the CLAC for more than 40 years:

"If there is one task to which the CLAC must devote itself, it is the establishment of the workplace as a work community. It must again become a place where it is a pleasure to work, where making profits is important, but never so important that workers are only judged by the bottom line. This struggle is unremitting and never-ending. I encourage all of you not to give up, but to keep at it in the conviction

that God will bless our efforts."

A super-sabbatical

In his address, Seerveld traced the Year of Jubilee to the time of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness, when they were the first people in the world to be given a day off from eking out a living. God gave his people a sabbath so they could "taste a bit of the jubilant fulfillment and peace God knew after creating the myriad kinds of amazing creatures in this world."

Jubilee is a super-sabbatical, scheduled on Yom Kippur, the day set aside for Israel for the forgiveness of its sins as a people.

"After experiencing surplus blessings from the forgiving Lord

God of the universe for more than a generation, we well-to-do humans who want ourselves to be obedient people of God — in a spirit of festive joy, as witness to the unbelievers all around about the kind of incredible merciful God we serve — happily forgive our debtors completely. And we even restore the land and property we have acquired extra over 50 years to the original trustees of those goods whose descendants are now in need." This is what Jubilee means, said Seerveld.

When Jesus preached his "hometown sermon," he told the people that he was bringing this jubilee into history. And when the

See CLAC page 2...

Opportunities International brings success to Nicaraguan business woman

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Starting with a loan of only \$110 US from Christian agency Opportunities International Canada (OIC), a Nicaraguan woman has moved from a life of poverty to successful ownership of six businesses after only five years. In early November, Martha Espinoza Osorio visited Ontario to receive OIC's Entrepreneur of the Year award, and to thank Canadian donors who have helped her and others achieve success with "micro-loans."

Running six businesses

While in Ontario, Osorio visited the *Christian Courier* office and explained how OIC has helped her out. With her first loan in 1997, said Osorio (as translated by OIC program director Caroline Sandusky Munshaw), "I bought gas, wood and coal, and also candies for the kids, so they would come, and the parents would be attracted to come and buy the coal and wood."

Since then, Osorio has received

19 loans from OIC, the latest worth \$1,300 US. With her two daughters and her youngest son, the single mother now runs six businesses. "I have a *pulperia*, which is a small village store" based in her home. "People come to buy ... a little bit of everything" — including clothing, and *nacatamales*; a "special weekend dessert" that she makes. She also works as a butcher, buying one pig a week, butchering it and selling the meat.

Besides that, Osorio has a telephone line in her home which is "the only telephone line for 400 people," See LOANS p. 2...



OPPORTUNITIES INTERNATIONAL CANADA

Martha Espinoza Osorio stands in front of her store in Managua, Nicaragua.

News

CLAC faced with temptations and challenges

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church of Acts shared its goods, it was not practising some form of communism but the jubilee inaugurated by Jesus Christ.

And it is this, too, that the CLAC has learned to celebrate, not once in 50 years, but every day on the job, declared Seerveld. He suggested ways which it has done this and might do so in the future. The struggle against the mechanization of work by the assembly line is not completely a thing of the past, but today computer-chip technology is fundamentally altering human work that isolates workers and that is cruel to unskilled workers. "A PC computer converts personal you into a technician, and technicians are valued strictly as means of production," warned Seerveld.

The pace imposed by computer technology has made companies leaner and meaner, gearing them "to cut-throat, competitive growth in the marketplace." Convinced that they must economize or die, they automate, hire part-timers, introduce split shifts, use temporary manpower agencies and so on. So

there is still a deep need for jubilee in the workplace.

A mess of pottage called a 'weekend'

The CLAC, given its relative success, is faced with temptations as well as challenges. Seerveld glanced at two: secularization and dichotomization. There is the temptation to lose sight of the big picture and lapse into business as usual. It is important for the CLAC to keep reminding us that there is much in our culture and in our world of labor that is "abnormal to God". "Western civilization has exchanged the Constantine birth-right of the Sunday for a mess of pottage called a 'weekend', which has a very savory taste," Seerveld declared, pointing to other distortions in the workplace that we begin to accept as normal.

Instead of being a public place where exchanges can happen under norms of stewardship, fairness and mutual care, the laissez-faire economy which dominates our daily lives today breathes "an unbridled spirit of self-interest, often aimed



COURTESY CLAC

Two former CLAC presidents in the '60s: James Josses (l.), Hank Kuntz.

at profit from luxuries customers can be induced to buy in the expectation of becoming happier." It is not a system that can be trusted "to do justice for the weak, because it is geared to the rights of the stronger, has a built-in ethic of 'the fittest survive'."

Because this system has become part of the "economic air we all breathe," it is easy to give up on the struggle to bring wholeness to the world of work and to settle instead for a few extra bucks in the

paycheque. Such a surrender can easily lead to a dichotomy: on the one hand confining ourselves to union business as usual, while on the other cranking up the "Christian talk" on special occasions.

To further sketch the nature of jubilee, Seerveld cited Jeremiah 29:7, which is addressed to God's people exiled in heathen Babylon:

Work hard for the shalom of the city to which I have banned you people; pray fervently to the Lord God on behalf of Babylon's

inhabitants, because shalom for you is inextricably tied in with the shalom of the city [where you find yourselves].

Practise saintly wisdom

This, suggested Seerveld, is still our calling today: "to propagate and practise our saintly wisdom for the good of Babylon!"

After indicating ways to do this, by loving our enemies and overcoming evil with good, and by witnessing to the state about its duties not just to workers but also to the weak and the poor, he closed with words of encouragement to the next generation of CLAC leaders:

"If the Bible in your constitution remains a live, Spirit-filling directive for you..., and you work heartily for the shalom of the inhabitants of Babylon as obedient servants of the Lord, despite whatever persecution and tears come your way, nothing will be able to separate your generation and those who follow you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, who shall continue to bless you with a peace that surpasses figuring it out."

Loans from Canadians help Latin Americans

... continued from page 1

explains Munshaw. But her latest business may be the biggest yet.

"She just bought a taxi," reports Munshaw. "Her son is going to run the taxi service."

Osorio got her first loan while living in a one-room shack with a dirt floor, but now lives in a concrete home with a concrete floor, report OIC.

Most loans for women

"A micro-loan from Opportunity International helped transform my life and my family's," explains Osorio. She lives in the Nicaraguan capital, Managua, where she was OIC's first client, but is now one of many OIC clients there. Osorio is part of a Trust Bank: a group of business women who cross-guarantee their loans. By design, more than 85 per cent of OIC's clients are women, says the agency, because women are the poorest of the world's poor.

The loans work on "a 16-week cycle," explains Munshaw. "I think that works well because if they're not repaying, the other women [in the group] will say bye, because that means I'm not going to get my next loan." There is solidarity, peer support, and accountability in the group, but also discipline. If one person defaults on a loan, everyone is responsible.

"If you repay your loan, at the



Heiner Ophardt

next loan cycle you're able to get a higher loan," notes Munshaw. Osorio has proven to be reliable because "after five years, she's proven she pays on time, and she saves. She's very smart, so she puts her savings in U.S. dollars. She knows that the [Nicaraguan] coroba fluctuates like crazy."

God is faithful

Osorio is a Catholic, and says, "I believe in God and I ask God for help with my businesses and my life, and he's helping me."

"I used to cry every day," said Osorio in another interview. "I asked God every day to bless me because I really wanted some way of living comfortably. I discovered he is faithful.... I asked God and he never left me. I could never imagine he would bless me in this way. I have all this because of him."

Osorio has been able to send

two of her children to university – which is very unusual in a country in which the typical student receives less than three years of schooling. "When mothers better themselves through micro-loans, there is hope for their children," she asserts.

OIC is "a Christian organization, but we don't expect our clients to be Christian," explains Munshaw. Our staff are Christian and we're doing [the work] in the name of Jesus, but we're not saying, 'you have to accept Jesus to get a loan.'"

OIC's loans are small by Canadian standards: averaging \$200 to \$300. But they have a big impact on clients such as Osorio. About 98 per cent of the agency's loans are repaid and recycled into new loans, reports OIC. Clients are charged a modest rate of interest of between two and seven per cent per month.

In Toronto, on Nov. 7, Osorio spoke to a group of 300 OIC supporters at the agency's annual fundraising and celebration dinner, and got a standing ovation, reports Munshaw.

Canadian business connection

Most of OIC's funds (70 per cent) come from private donors, while 30 per cent come from CIDA (the Canadian International

Development Agency), explains Munson. Of private supporters, "the majority are business people. They understand to grow your business needs capital."

One such supporter is Heiner Ophardt, president of Hygiene-Technik Inc., a sanitary equipment company based in Beamsville, Ont. which has made thousands of dollars worth of donations to OIC. Heiner has traveled to Nicaragua, Honduras and the Dominican Republic to see the work the agency does. Ophardt appreciates OIC's approach to helping the poor. "From a business perspective, it's an amazing tool," he tells CC. "[OIC] applies the same rules you are using daily in your business.... The funds we put in grow or stay there. These loans can revolve for a long, long time. That is what you do in business as well. You don't want to lose money."

Ophardt sees OIC's loans as a hand up, rather than a handout. "It builds self-esteem.... That is something which is pretty amazing to see. With so little money, like a hundred bucks, you can change [Martha's] life and her family's life.... With very little money – which keeps growing – you have tremendous impact."

Ophardt observes that repayment rates for OIC's loans are "tremendously high compared to Canada."

The Transformation Project

Last March OIC started a new program called the Transformation Project, which goes beyond economic relief, explains Munson. "We're fully committed to physical, spiritual and emotional transformation." The project consists of weekly training sessions for OIC clients. "It's really exciting," says Munson, who has been to some of these sessions. "At each meeting, the loan officers will present a training module for 20 minutes, and it's based on a Bible verse. Whatever the module is – communication, family relations, business administration, spiritual development – there's always one Bible verse it's based on. There are activities – it's very action-oriented, very participatory."

"There was one for self-esteem. People went around and said, 'What do you like about yourself?' For many people, it's probably the first time that anyone asked them that.... The idea is to help them feel confident that God loves them and values them, and that they should value themselves. It's important for all of us to remember that. They've never done this, so it's neat to see how they light up."

While OI works in 32 countries, its Canadian branch focuses primarily on Latin American countries such as Nicaragua.

News/Politics

Religion and law both make total claims upon self

Sue Careless

MONTREAL, Quebec — Both religion and law make total claims upon the self, declared Chief Justice of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, at the recent conference on "Pluralism, Religion and Public Policy," held at McGill University, Montreal.

"A fundamental tenet of the rule of law is that all people are subject to its authority," said McLachlan. "It makes total claims upon the self and leaves little of human experience untouched. Yet religion exerts a similarly comprehensive claim. In the minds of its adherents, its authority stands outside and above that of the law."

"So by examining freedom of religion, we are asking how one authoritative and ubiquitous system

of cultural understanding, the rule of law, accommodates another, similarly comprehensive system of belief. The modern religious citizen is caught between two all-encompassing sets of commitments. The law faces the seemingly paradoxical task of asserting its own ultimate authority while carving out a space within itself in which individuals and communities can manifest alternate, and often competing, sets of ultimate commitments."

A new era

McLachlin observed, "There is little doubt that the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has ushered in a new era of protection for religious conscience in Canada. The *Charter of Rights and*

Freedoms did not introduce the concept of religious freedom into the Canadian legal landscape. Far from it. Notions of religious freedom reach back to pre-confederation times and suffuses legislation and case-law since that time."

The Chief Justice argued that the Charter has made a "linguistic" contribution. "The Charter was important because of its role in articulating the core values in our society.... the Charter awakened a discussion about the purposes and objectives of protecting religious freedom and, in so doing, called upon us all to better articulate our normative commitments."

"As the cultural diversity of our nation has developed, we have come to recognize that a multiplicity of worldviews grounded in

alternate sources of authority does not necessarily threaten the rule of law, but rather strengthens and completes public life and discourse. We have come to a fuller appreciation of the intrinsic connection between respecting religious conscience and attending to the inherent dignity of all persons. Freedom of conscience and of religion have become a component of the Canadian experience of the rule of law. The law has matured along with society."

Limits to the law

Unfortunately, unlike the case with all the other presentations, no time was allowed for questions after the Chief Justice's address. Jean Bethke Elshtain, a philosopher from the University of Chicago, did, however, deliver a formal response. She noted that even historically, "The King's writ doesn't extend to everything." She asked, "Where does Caesar illegitimately usurp what is rightfully God's?"

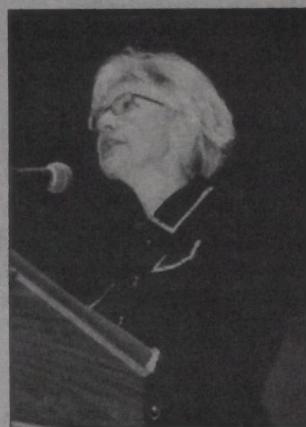
Elshtain also observed that there has recently been a turning away from the "strong separationism" of church and state in the U.S. Citizens should not have to "bracket their beliefs in the public square. Religious faith is not a private matter. The courts need to recognize there are multiple institutions with multiple points of authority."

Earlier in the conference, Elshtain had also delivered an address of her own. In it she noted how philosopher Hannah Arendt had observed that in World War II, totalitarian regimes stripped their domestic victims first of their civic standing, then of their moral standing. "Human dignity is God-given and cannot be revoked by governments," said Elshtain. "The wider human rights culture is not strong enough to discourage genocide."

Elshtain recommended the Catholic social teaching in the Papal Encyclicals because it "is directed to all persons of good will, believer and non-believer alike." She observed that "Responsible freedom is not motivated by coercion but by duty."

She urged opposition to the concept of "self-sovereignty" in which we are "whole and complete unto ourselves, in isolation from community, the self being the sum total. Rather, a person is an individual in a community with a historical and social context not an indiscriminate blob. We need to support individuality not individualism, human solidarity not human isolation."

In the final panel discussion, "When group rights conflict", Ian Benson, the co-chair of the conference and executive director



SUE CARELESS

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin

of the Centre for Cultural Renewal, expressed some concerns about the protection of rights in the courts:

* Does the mechanism for resolving rights (the courts) actually threaten those very rights?

* Are there fundamentally different conceptions of rights in a post-Christian, pluralistic society that makes them difficult to resolve?

* How do the courts handle communitarian claims with religious roots?

* Equality or individual rights can end up trumping collective or group rights.

Christian printer defended

Benson observed that the Scott Brockie case was rightly decided. As a Christian printer, Brockie argued that he could not in good conscience print material for a gay rights group. The court respected Brockie's religious freedom, said Benson. "The government should not tell individuals which groups they should support."

He offered four considerations to help the state referee boundary disputes between various communities in society:

1. Commonality. Every citizen is a believer of one sort or another, so the state should not drive us to monism (one ultimate principle or point of view).

2. State limitation. The state should, as the Charter does, recognize pre-existing rights.

3. No one right has automatic trump status.

4. Race, gender and sexual orientation should not be treated as priority rights. When they are seen as dominant rights, any dissent regarding them is treated as intolerance and hate.

The McGill conference only confirmed the view of 19th century French historian Alexis de Tocqueville that "Despotism can do without faith, but freedom cannot."

Republican win gets mixed review



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

The United States holds the equivalent of a parliamentary election every two years, when all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and one-third of the 100 Senate seats are contested. It is a truism of American politics that the party winning the White House can expect to lose congressional seats two years later.

However, in last month's "mid-term" elections (falling, that is, in the middle of a presidential term) President George W. Bush confounded the expectations of pundits and managed to gain the Senate for the Republican Party and to increase its hold on the House. For the first time in nearly half a century, the Republicans are in complete control of the two branches of government, thus giving Bush something of the popular mandate that eluded him in the cliffhanger election of 2000.

Republicans seen as pro-life party

Christians in that country are predictably divided on whether this is a good thing. Pro-life organizations are pleased because there is a much higher proportion of pro-life candidates in the Republican than in the Democratic Party. In fact, despite the existence of a group called Democrats for Life, the party as a whole has become a near monolith in favor of the continued abortion licence. For those Americans for whom the abortion issue is pre-eminent, there seems to be no choice but to vote Republican.

Similarly, those who believe there is something fundamental at stake in issues such as euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide and foetal stem cell research are generally heartened, because Bush and many of his fellow Republicans are known to take a position favoring respect for the human person in all stages of development. Given that the courts are frequently called upon to decide cases in these areas, many are encouraged that presidential nominees for the federal bench will have an easier time securing Senate confirmation. A Bush-appointed Supreme Court, for example, will likely not engage in the imaginative jurisprudence characteristic of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling but will stay

closer to the letter of the law.

On the other hand, there are many Christians uneasy over a Republican victory for other valid reasons. Since Ronald Reagan came to the White House more than 20 years ago, Republicans have not been famously concerned for protecting the physical environment. In fact, there is an unfortunate tendency in the conservative circles dominating the party to deride the expressed concerns of environmentalists as "extreme." Bush appears to be following in this line insofar as he proposes to open up Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil exploration and development.

At one time, as Jeremy Beer has recently observed, conservatives were at the forefront of conservation efforts. This is no longer the case, as many have uncritically bought into the notion that the unfettered market will take care of such issues.

Finally, many Christians are uneasy over Bush's tendency to use American political and military power unilaterally, that is, to try to exempt the United States from international agreements and organizations when they are deemed not to be in that country's interest. In this, Bush is much different from his father, who took great pains to piece together an international coalition to oust Saddam Hussein's Iraq from its illegal occupation of Kuwait. But justice in the international realm requires more than seeking national self-interest, particularly for the world's lone superpower, whose every action inevitably has global repercussions.

Thus discerning Christians are likely to give a mixed review to last month's Republican victory at the polls. Like most elections, it is cause for neither unmitigated sorrow nor unqualified rejoicing.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario.



Open letter

First CRC Toronto becomes inclusive congregation

Harry der Nederlanden

On October 10 the churches of Classis Toronto of the Christian Reformed Church and the synodical officers received from First Toronto CRC a letter informing them that the congregation has decided to become an "inclusive" congregation. Gays and lesbians living in committed relationships will be welcomed as full members of the body of Christ. They will also be able to serve as office-bearers.

The decision was not made flamboyantly or defiantly; it was taken in the full realization that it will precipitate dismay and controversy. A great deal has already been written and said on the issue and, no doubt, this action will elicit much more debate.

We publish here the open letter of First Toronto in its entirety because such a debate must begin by listening closely to what our brothers and sisters have to say to us. They have that right, for they have wrestled with the issue in a community where it's not just an abstract issue. Please read their letter carefully and sympathetically.

Open Pastoral Letter to Our Brothers and Sisters in Classis Toronto, Oct. 10, 2002

We are writing this letter to ask you for grace and understanding for our small congregation. We have had a beautiful and cherished history here in urban Toronto, and our pastoral joys and sorrows have been

many, as in any church. Recently it became important for us to make a basic decision as a church. Our accumulated experiences led us to a point where we had to choose: Were we willing to identify ourselves as an inclusive congregation, or not? We decided to do so.

Everything was at stake

Not being courageous enough to make a decision about this choice could have easily led to the spiritual death of our congregation. We feel quite sure of that. In our particular situation, at this particular time in our history, it became important to honestly face this matter for the sake of our own local congregation. We could not be in limbo any longer. Many years of pastoral experience, hopes as well as traumas, a beautiful ministry to and with both straights and gays, led us to this point where everything was, in some ways, at stake. Words were not enough anymore and a decision was essential.

On the other hand, of course, we knew that to face the question directly and locally involved the risk of potentially straining in a serious way our relationship with the denomination we all know and love, our CRC denomination. We decided to embrace that tension by having the congregation vote on the fundamental concept of inclusivity while simultaneously indicating as a church that we would not be trying to superficially "provoke" the classis or the denomination by, e.g. forthwith sending partners in committed gay relationships to Classis as delegates. In other words, we want to send the signal that our primary aim is to simply be a happy and healthy congregation, not purposely to cause shock waves elsewhere. We are sacrificing something very important to us in order, if possible, to remain at peace with all (Rom. 12:18).

We are well aware of our ecclesiastical context when we see Synod 2002 vote 168-12 in favor of a report that to us did not seem to differ substantially from 1973. For this same reason we could sense that it might not be wise or helpful to cast ourselves into the role of agitators who would like to write all kinds of overtures to change the mind of Synod by some unforeseeable future date. We are actually not very interested in debating the subject any longer or delving into it on some repeated basis. For us we are actually significantly past that point. We have a wide-ranging ministry to do, that does not revolve around only one issue; we have a church to concentrate on in all its facets, a sense that God has called us to a unique work and opportunity in the urban and professional setting of Toronto. We are a church, not an issue-resolving club. We want to worship God. That has always been our deepest desire.

Some healthy and vigorous tensions

Many of us come from CRC churches all over North America. Our daily life experience, as well as our church experience, frequently puts us in contact with the broad spectrum of modern society. We have never been unanimous as a congregation, nor do we seek to be. We also aim to wholeheartedly welcome into our church people whose view on homosexuality is consistent with the Synod's view. On the whole, we feel we have had some success with "keeping the unity in the bond of peace" within our congregation. But it has not been easy. Undoubtedly we have made pastoral mistakes. We freely confess that we have experienced this to be a volatile issue, and we are grateful that God has given us as much continued love for each other as we

do in fact have. We love each other dearly in our congregation. That is probably one of the reasons why we ended up with some healthy and vigorous tensions: Throughout our history we never felt like letting anyone go, no matter what their opinions were.

Our pastor tries to encourage us today by speaking of what he calls a minimalist hope and a maximalist hope.

The minimalist hope, he says, is to be what is known in common parlance as "a safe congregation." Various denominations, including some with positions similar to our Synodical statements, now have such places. A safe congregation is one which is accepted within the broader fellowship as a parish that is admittedly somewhat out of sync because it has become completely inclusive. Such acceptance can even happen reluctantly. Someone once said, perhaps with a mild touch of spiritual cynicism, "A safe congregation is a church where people are glad they can send their sons and daughters even if they publicly criticize the existence of such a church."

A helpful resource

The maximalist hope, he says, is that we as a congregation might actually be a helpful resource to the classis and denomination as it eventually, perhaps inevitably, moves into a deeper grappling with the issue of homosexuality. Because of the experience and even the humility we developed as we went through the wringer, we may be able to be of some assistance when the denomination feels worried the issue could bring turmoil at broader levels. We could potentially be of service. As he says, to use his words: "We do have many really nice people in Toronto. If the issue is going to come to the CRC sooner or later, why not have it come with us on board as a helpful resource, a highly talented and very experienced congregation?"

We sincerely ask you, as our brothers and sisters in Christ, please let us be, at the very least, "a safe congregation" within the CRC fold. We have no desire whatsoever to leave the CRC. We are not schismatic people. Many of us serve on boards of various Christian organizations filled with CRC members. Our church bulletin is full of CRC announcements. Our enjoyment of each other's fellowship is actually similar to that found within many rural CRC congregations. We have no desire to go casting about looking for some other ecclesiastical tradition within which to set up our tent. We are sincerely Reformed in our outlook and theology, and we feel badly that some will take our recent decision on inclusivity as a painful betrayal. We did not want to betray any people or any institutions. We certainly never felt we were betraying our deep commitment to the Bible or the process of subscribing sincerely to the three forms of unity. What happened pastorally is that our congregation's identity and future was on the line. We had to do what we had to do. We had to have the courage to conduct a vote and then, if necessary, step out in faith. We could not hide, we could not duck.

In conclusion, then, please take the time, first, to consider this letter as council. Secondly, please help us find the room to be a "safe congregation." Thirdly, if you see a way for us to be of help to others in some way, any way, somehow, let us know.

Sincerely, Henry Hofstra, Chair, on behalf of the Council of First CRC, Toronto

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Opinion/Letter

Why we remember and whom

A Remembrance Day address given by Harry Van Dyke

Once again it is November the 11th and we stop at the 11th hour, to reflect, to remember, and to fall silent.

It is a good tradition, for young as well as for old. For none of us may ever forget the price paid for our freedom.

The first Great War of the past century ended exactly 84 years ago, in 1918, on Nov. 11, at 11 o'clock in the morning, when the shelling stopped, just after the last four Canadians were killed in a deadly exchange of fire in Mons, southern Belgium.

My father used to tell us how as a boy he would be working on grandpa's fields, 100 km north of the front in Flanders, and they would hear the distant booming of the guns *all day long*; it would subside by nightfall, only to resume in full force the next day. This could go on for days on end.

Flanders' Fields turned crimson

Flanders' Fields turned crimson with the blood of men, on both sides. When the rifles were laid down and the machine guns put away, after four years of carnage, those that had survived went home, scarred for life.

In the months and years that followed, the War Graves Commissions carried out the sad and solemn work of giving the dead their final resting place on earth.

Meanwhile, the issues were not resolved, compounded by the terms of the peace treaties, and a second World War had to be fought before the world could return to relative normalcy.

Who would want to glamorize war? Those who have been through it say it is hell. We who live today are in little danger of romanticizing armed conflict—not after seeing movies like *Platoon* and *Saving Private Ryan*!

Those who displayed valor often did so in

the face of sheer horror. — *Lest we forget.*

The Apostle writes in his letter to the Romans, chapter 12: "Live at peace with all men — so far as it depends on you."

That is a commandment for nations as much as for individuals. But peace depends, not just on us, but on many others as well.

In our fallen world, there is no guarantee of success for peaceable intentions, a conciliatory attitude, the negotiation of differences.

Evil bides its time, and seizes its opportunity. Sometimes peace cannot be maintained with justice. Naked aggression must be opposed by naked force.

Last week, the United Nations resolved that terror regimes boastfully breathing murderous threats *must disarm*, or else.

Political authorities have fearsome powers. One is to wage war. They do not carry the sword in vain, the Apostle writes in the next chapter. The Bible does not teach pacifism. When John the Baptist announced the coming of the kingdom, soldiers asked him: "What must we do?" John did not answer: "Quit the army," but: "Don't browbeat people. Be content with your wages."

It is the bounden duty of governments to protect the weak and innocent and to shield their subjects against aggression and oppression. Our Belgic Confession echoes Scripture when it states that God has invested civil government with the power of the sword "for the punishment of those who do evil and for the protection of those who do well" (Belgic Conf., art. 36).

Governments need self-restraint

But surely, not with *weapons of mass destruction*? Were the fire-bombings of Hamburg and Dresden, were atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki legitimate uses of power? Will Iraq have to be brought to heel by *carpet bombing*?



VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA

lawful governments against the overpowering forces of evil.

That is our situation — till Christ returns. And waiting for that Better Day, we shall ever stand on guard.

Today we remember the repeated sacrifices made in the cause of freedom and justice.

And — let us not be so ungrateful as to forget — we may do so, thanks be to God, as the beneficiaries of the winning side!

We are reminded today that in honoring the fallen we honor the Providential ruling of the Lord of history who is also the Lord of battle who gave the Allies the victory.

But now, watch out! Victors of war cannot avoid asking themselves: God was on our side; were we on God's side? And are we now on God's side? And is our own house in order?

As we sang just now:

*Be ours a nation evermore
that no oppression blights,
where justice rules from shore to shore,
from lakes to northern lights.*

Honest patriotism is admirable

Love of country — honest patriotism — is an admirable thing, but its wicked perversions are nationalism and imperialism.

For these 'isms' forbid all criticism. They command, "My country, right or wrong." They make of one's homeland an idol which cannot stand before the face of God.

Remembrance Day is therefore also a time of communal self-examination.

Remembrance Day calls us to examine ourselves as a people, and to resolve to repent of our maltreatment of others and to dedicate our society anew to God and his kingdom of righteousness.

Therefore it is with grateful hearts but also in profound humility that we remember all those who paid the supreme sacrifice and so, under God, gave us a new day of peace, a new day to work for justice, a new dawn of freedom to serve.

Hielema should show more respect to Americans and their president

Can news commentator Mr. Bert Hielema ever find anything positive to say in his comments about the U.S.A.? It seems to me that most of his comments regarding the U.S.A. are snide, sarcastic comments, and certainly one-sided. As a Christian commentator he ought to be able to find some good about his neighbor.

Also, I believe he should show more respect for a country's leader. He only occasionally addresses President Bush by his title or even by "Mr." but most often he just writes "Bush." I know that in writing about a person it is correct to use just the last name, but only after first addressing the intended person by his or her title, or at least by Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.

Most Americans support President Bush

On the other hand, he seems never to address Hussein by his last name, but only by his first name, Saddam. Is he on familiar

terms with him?

In one article (October 21) he seems to imply that the U.S.A. needs Iraq's oil. In fact, only a comparatively small amount of U.S. oil comes from that country. One more thing, he should not separate President Bush from the people. Most Americans support the President, although all of them probably disagree with him occasionally on one thing or another.

So when he criticizes "Bush" he is also criticizing most of the American people, and I find that rather arrogant, especially when his negative criticism is seldom relieved by something positive. We have traveled extensively across Canada and the U.S.A., and have found that the people of both countries, with few exceptions, think of each other as friends. One would never know that from reading Mr. Hielema's comments about the U.S.A.

Ed Joling,
Kalamazoo, Mich.

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Deafness/Education

I can hear you now

Berta Hosmar

Until about two years ago I had always thought that going deaf would not be as bad as going blind.

If you should lose your hearing, you could always learn sign language and lip reading, and you could still lead a rewarding life. How much worse would it be if you could not see the beautiful world around you anymore or the faces of your loved ones. Your life could still be very fulfilling, but, heaven forbid, if I should have to choose, I'd pick becoming deaf.

Deafness hit close to home

But then becoming deaf hit close to home, and I have now seen first-hand what becoming totally deaf in a short while can do to a small child. Our grandson Levi, now seven, youngest son of our daughter Joyce and her husband Paul, lost all his hearing in less than a year.

We've been told by experts that for a young child, who can't read or write yet, and who can't communicate anymore because there has not been time to learn sign language, going deaf is almost as frightening as going blind. Speech and hearing is all about communication. It's who you are. If that is taken away suddenly, that young child becomes frightened and insecure.

He can't understand his parents anymore or his siblings. He sees their lips moving, but the words sound garbled and he can't make sense out of them. At school he does not understand the teachers anymore or his friends. Sounds like the rustling of leaves, the twittering of birds, or the lapping of waves on a beach have disappeared.

Thoroughly traumatized

In other words, that child will become thoroughly traumatized.

All these bad things happened to Levi when he was barely five years old. At that age his parents and

others noticed that Levi seemed to have trouble understanding people. A doctor removed some wax from his ears, and the parents were told there seemed to be nothing wrong.

But his hearing loss became more noticeable, and his parents took him to a specialist.

After many tests, including a brain scan at the Hospital for Sick Children, the devastating news was: Levi had a progressive disease of the cochlea. It was not a matter of *will* he lose all his hearing but *when* will he lose all his hearing. Numerous visits were made to specialists and audiologists, and Levi was fitted with hearing aids.

For a while they helped, and we all prayed that God would grant Levi a few more years of hearing so he could learn to read and write, and make his feelings known. But it was not to be.

After every visit to the audiologist his parents were told his hearing had gone down yet several more decibels, and he was fitted with even stronger hearing aids.

A ray of hope

There was a ray of hope. At the Hospital for Sick Children, Levi was seen by Dr. Papsin, who specializes in operating on children who are born deaf or have severe hearing loss. The children who qualify for the surgery receive a cochlear implant.

The surgery is fairly new. A tiny disk, the size of a loonie, is surgically implanted under the skin into the cochlea. That disk is connected with a magnet and wires to a tiny computer, worn around the ear or the waist. Sounds transmitted from there to the auditory nerve are "translated" by the brain into mechanical hearing.

Levi turned out to be a perfect candidate for the implant. There was one drawback. Levi still had some hearing left, and until all that

hearing was gone, the mechanical hearing, would clash with the natural hearing.

A more difficult time

An even more difficult time began for the whole family. At the start of every new day his parents would think: "Will he still be able to understand us this morning? Will the hearing aids and the F.M. system we have bought still be

effective today?"

Paul and Joyce were trying to lead as normal a family life as possible, but the strain the whole family was under was often noticeable, for Levi became more frightened and frustrated every day. A formerly happy and outgoing Kindergarten student, he now started to hate school because his world became more and more silent and alien.

Soon he was too anxious to ride the school bus and his mom had to drive him and sometimes stay in the classroom with him, to give him a feeling of security. A normally very athletic little boy, who loved to play soccer or hockey, he now often played quietly at home on his computer or with his toys, for he could not understand his peers during some sports.

Continued on page 13...

Prison as forced sabbatical

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



My mother has been to prison. In fact, she has been many times. She goes as a volunteer under the authority of the prison chaplain, acting as a Christian mentor to inmates who ask for such services. What is so exciting about her work is that these men are at a low point in their lives, where they need help and might even desperately want to change their lives around.

"They have lots of time to think," she tells me. "To think about why they are there, what the future holds for them."

At first this sounds like students in university. People who have lots of time to think. But thinking that goes on in university is not as dramatically introspective as that of a prisoner.

"I sometimes see drastic changes," my mother tells me. "Guys who are one month sobbing and sobbing with deep regret and then a month later rejoicing in the Lord and eagerly poring over Bible studies."

Students may be too young to have regrets. University life is not time to repent. It's time to dream, explore, try on different possible vocations. But if they don't stop to think, they may wind up somewhere they don't want to be....

Wilderness experience

My colleague at Brock, Rev. George Addison, used to be the chaplain at Toronto's Don Jail. I asked him about his experience behind bars.

"These are people in major crisis," he explained. "The deep stress and grief of prison is like being lost in an untracked wilderness — it's a biblical image that is really appropriate."

I asked him to compare prison inmates with students. He said compared with the minorities that fill the prisons, students are generally white and privileged. Both institutions reflect the racial and ethnic tensions of broader society.

He agreed with the thesis, too: people think things over more in prison. Although the experience can be stressful — at times focused only on survival — prison forces a crisis on people.

"Jesus asked the young man to give up all he had and follow. But he wasn't ready. We only change when we need to, when we hit a life crisis, when we are truly open to spiritual awakening," he concluded. "Prisons were modeled after the isolated cells of monasteries. A place to think, to be penitent. Thus the 'penitentiary.'"

"For those who are ready and open to the spirit," he continued, "hitting bottom" in a jail or detox/treatment centre may provide a better location and moment for conversion than all the

cathedrals in the world.

As Rabbi Harold Kushner would say, sometimes asking "Why is this happening to me?" may be the wrong question. Instead, ask, "Now that this has happened, how can I and God work to bring good out of evil, order out of chaos?"

Letters to Olga

What if you are in prison for being *good*, though? What do you do with all that time to think?

In 1979 Vaclav Havel was imprisoned unjustly by the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Four years behind bars, he had lots of time to think. Unfortunately, he was allowed only four pages to write, and he was only permitted to address his wife.

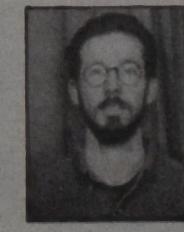
"The letters," he testified later, "gave me a chance to develop a new way of looking at myself and examining my attitudes to the fundamental things in life.... In time I learned how to think ahead and arrange my thoughts in thematic cycles, and to weave the motifs in and out of them...."

Havel's imprisonment became an opportunity to reflect, repent, and re-evaluate the direction of his life and relationships, and the resulting letters became a political and philosophical treatise he later entitled *Letters to Olga*. Soon after, the communist regime fell, and he made his way up to Prime Minister of the Czech Republic.

Don't get me wrong. Prison is a horrible experience I would not seriously wish on anyone. My mom says strip searches alone, for example, are incredibly demoralizing. Hatred, too, is so easily bred behind iron bars.

But why are there so many movies about prison experiences? Why do some of the greatest writings come from prison? I'm thinking of St. Paul, Martin Luther King, Jr., Dietrich Bonhoeffer, to name a few. Prison may be a forced sabbatical that yields much fruitfulness.

If only we could take advantage of our university careers — and our holidays, Sundays, lunch hours — in the same way. Why wait for forced sabbaticals due to illness, relationship breakdown, and laziness? Take time to reflect voluntarily....



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

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Book Reviews

Passing the Colors: Engaging Visual Culture in the 21st Century

By Chris Stoffel Overvoorde
Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan
 Paperback, 200 pp., \$20 (US)
 Reviews (3) by Harry der Nederlanden

Anyone with a love for art and who rejoices to see it dedicated to its proper end, namely, to help us see the glory of the Creator in what he has made (and the horror of what we have disfigured) will enjoy *Passing the Colors* by Chris Stoffel Overvoorde. It is a combination autobiography and course in Christian art appreciation and mini-history of one person's struggle to be faithful in his craft. The combination is rich. The book is filled with illustrations of Overvoorde's art, twelve pages in full color.

Although he early showed a pre-disposition toward art, the young Overvoorde was sent to trade school to become a metal worker and ended up as a diesel mechanic working on the huge engines of ocean-going ships. However, his love for art made him restless in his occupation.

After serving in the army, in his early twenties, he immigrated to the U.S.A. and ended up working in a factory in Grand Rapids. Here, he quickly became friends with fellow artists and began taking formal schooling in art.

I won't try to summarize Overvoorde's life story for you; it is a fascinating one and well-told.

And it is sprinkled with gems of insight. In relating different phases of his art training, for example, Overvoorde tells of an exchange between himself and one of his instructors, Professor Lewis. They

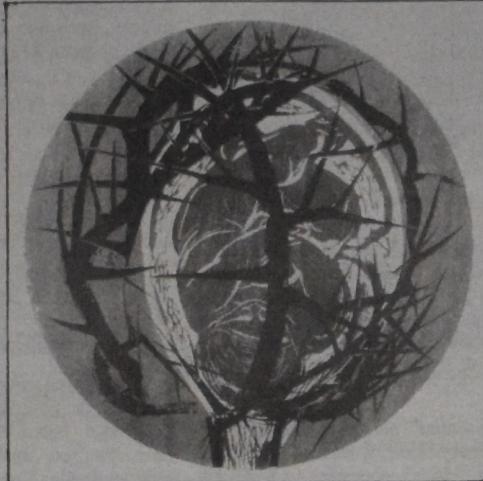
are discussing a large painting Overvoorde called "John the Baptist".

"During coffee break I had related to him, rather enthusiastically, how I saw John the Baptist's cry in the wilderness. When he saw the work, he took his time responding. When he finally spoke, he said this: 'What you said in the coffee shop is different from what you are doing here.' It took me a while to accept that, for it had not yet dawned on me that what we think we see is not always what we really see. The mind can play tricks on us, because what we believe modifies what we see and how we see it. I needed to learn that what we desire

is not always what we make; what we think we see and believe is therefore seldom clear to others."

This is just one bit of wisdom to be discovered in this book. Overvoorde has given us a gift in this book, sharing his life and his passion in a way that enables us to be hitchhikers and to some extent make this journey toward clearer vision alongside him.

This would make an excellent gift for a high school student or beyond with an interest in art; it will give him or her a concrete example of how to dedicate that gift to the glory of God. Paired with one of Seerveld's books, such a gift may even change his or her life.



Holland and the Dutch: Nature and Nostalgia

By Dirk M. de Boer
Published by: Perfect Picture, Nederland, 192 pp.

This is one of the most exquisite coffee-table books on The Netherlands I've seen. The photography is top-notch and the colors of the

illustrations better than in most art books. There are huge two-page spreads of nature scenes as well as numerous smaller shots, amounting to hundreds of pictures. It's a feast for the eyes.

De Boer gives us a wonderful appreciation of the Dutch land-

scape as well as of the people and what they have built on it; he clearly is attuned to the natural beauties of his native country. This is not just a picture book, however; there's an amazing wealth of information to deepen your grasp of the country's culture.

Although born there, I've never felt a twinge of nostalgia for Holland, but after savoring the pictures in this excellent book, I'm tempted to buy a plane ticket. The book is expensive, but it's cheaper than a ticket. A gift which will keep grandma and grandpa or even the grandchildren turning pages all evening. The dealer in Canada is: Vanderheide Publishing Co. Ltd. PO Box 3006 Stn LCD 1 Langley, BC V3A 4R3 Phone: 1-800-881-0705 email: windmill@godutch.com website: www.GoDutch.com

Price: Can\$59.95/US\$39.95 plus GST in Canada and postage Can\$5/US\$4.00.



A classic Dutch scene taken from de Boer's book.

DIRK M. DE BOER

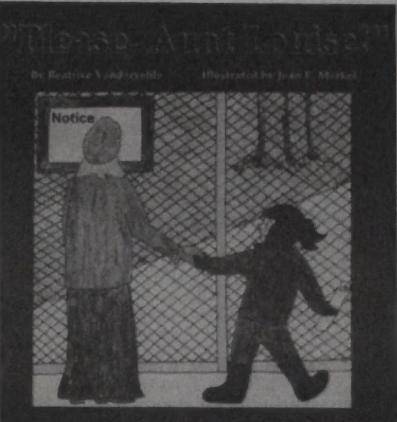
Please, Aunt Louise!

By Beatrice Vandervelde; Illustrations by Jean E. Merkel
Essence Publishing, Belleville, ON; 32 pp. \$9.95

Please, Aunt Louise! is a read-to-me book (or with me) that explores the image of life as a journey on a children's level. It was written by Beatrice Vandervelde, a Christian school teacher and writer, and illustrated by Jean Merkel with drawing deliberately done in a child-like style. Little Kaitlin is eager to go with her Aunt Louise to her destination – the muffin shop. But she is irked and frustrated when her aunt makes repeated stops and detours along the way.

Without getting preachy, the story subtly conveys the hint that life isn't just about reaching your own personal goals or desires. Allowing yourself to be turned aside to pause to help someone else along the way can be more important. The book is a good antidote to the not-so-subtle messages sent by our 'purpose-driven' society that pursuit of our own plans is everything.

To purchase: Beatrice Vandervelde, 3 Cathcart St., Willowdale, ON, M2M 1E8, Ph. (416) 226-3975, e-mail: beavan@gosympatico.ca



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Church

Evacuations from Ivory Coast signal deepening crisis

David Miller

MIAMI (Compass) — The evacuation of foreign missionaries from Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire) in October drew attention to the serious crisis unfolding in the West African nation of 15 million, a crisis that could have long-term impact on the Christian church there.

Thousands displaced

On Sept. 19, hundreds of disgruntled soldiers launched a military uprising in three major cities across the country aimed at overthrowing President Laurent Gbagbo. Fighting between the rebels and government troops quickly spread to half the country, with battle lines drawn roughly between the predominantly Muslim population in the north and the Christian and animist south. Bouake, Ivory Coast's second most populous city located in the centre of the country, has sustained the most violent attacks. Fighting has claimed hundreds of lives and driven a third of Bouake's 600,000 residents from the city.

Some 160 students from the International Christian Academy, a school for missionary children in Bouake, were among those September refugees. The school has closed, as well as another missionary school in the capital city of Yamoussoukro. In mid-October, the U.S. Embassy upgraded its security assessment for Ivory Coast



BAPTIST PRESS

Baptist volunteers show Ivoirians how to sterilize drinking water.

to a Level 4 alert, prompting many expatriates to leave the country.

"As Americans, we never felt personally threatened," said Larry Sellers, a Church of God missionary from Yamoussoukro who evacuated on Oct. 24. "The main concern was just not to get caught up in a movement that we couldn't get out of later, if commercial flights stopped and travel within the country got very difficult. So it's more of a precaution."

The Summer Institute of Linguistics, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, New Tribes Mission and the Freewill Baptist Church reportedly evacuated missionaries. Others pared their staffs down to

"essential" personnel. Many missionary families went to neighboring African countries to wait out the crisis. Some, like Sellers, returned to the United States or Europe.

Not the first time

This is not the first time unrest has interrupted life for Sellers, his wife LeAnn and their children. The family was living in Gisenyi, Rwanda, in 1994, when genocidal fighting erupted between Hutu and Tutsi tribal peoples. That disturbance claimed 800,000 lives in a four-month period. The Sellers family were forced to leave the country and were unable to return.

Could similar violence break out in Ivory Coast?

"Our hope, of course, is that it will not, but some of the elements are there that could make that happen," Sellers said. He cited long-standing tensions between the country's diverse ethnic groups, aggravated by religious differences, as the elements that could fuel violence.

The general perception of the media is that the rebels are Muslim and the government troops are Christian. That is an oversimplification of the situation, because there are actually both on both sides.

"If the rebel forces should gain control of the government, then it's likely that Islam could become more favored and Christianity open to greater opposition. But I don't see that immediately in the future," Sellers said.

First introduced in 1900, Islam has grown rapidly in Ivory Coast. Today, four out of 10 Ivoirians are Muslim. Christians account for 32 percent of the population. About half of them belong to evangelical Protestant churches, the other half are Roman Catholics. The religious landscape eerily resembles that of nearby Nigeria, where outbreaks of violence against Christians in predominantly Muslim northern states have caused an estimated 200,000 deaths since 1999.

At press time, the warring sides in the Ivory Coast conflict were observing a temporary cease-fire and conducting peace negotiations in Togo. Neighboring countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) offered to deploy a force of 2,000 soldiers to help maintain the peace.

Meanwhile, the Associated Press reported that Muslim soldiers in the rebel ranks had begun to mistreat the Christian population in areas under their control. Communication and travel remained cut off between the rebel-controlled north and government territory in the south.

The situation hinders church leaders like Sellers from fulfilling pastoral duties. Sellers lost contact with four churches recently planted among the Senoufo people in the Korgho area. Nevertheless, he remains optimistic about the long-term prospects for Christians in Ivory Coast.

"Looking at spiritual implications, I think this might have a positive impact on the church," he said. "It's going to shake up the complacency of a lot of people."

"We're already beginning to see some of that taking place. In the last few weeks, attendance has been up in church. We've seen new people coming to the Lord, particularly in the northern, rebel-controlled area."

Vietnam closes hundreds of churches; provincial leaders jailed or missing

HO CHI MINH CITY (BP) — Information has been pouring out of Vietnam about a recent wave of government repression against Montagnard evangelicals in Vietnam's Central Highlands, Compass Direct news service reported Nov. 13.

Documents acquired in October by religious and human rights workers in this Southeast Asian country confirm that by the end of September, 354 of 412 churches had been forcibly disbanded in Dak Lak province alone. By mid-October, about 50 Christian pastors and elders in the province had been arrested or had "disappeared."

Rest of churches may close

It is expected that the remaining 58 churches in the province will soon be closed.

Montagnard churches — "Montagnard" means "mountain people" and is a collective name for Vietnam's tribal groups inhabiting the Central Highlands — were historically part of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South). Last year, the ECVN(S) was granted le-

gal recognition. However, only a handful of many hundreds of Montagnard churches were allowed to identify with the ECVN(S).

On Nov. 7 Freedom House released news of ongoing persecution of Hmong Christians in Vietnam's northwest provinces, including the story and photo of a 36-year-old Hmong Christian man who died from beatings by police because he was a believer. Also, Vietnam's normally cautious Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops recently released a letter decrying the persecution of Catholic Montagnards.

Beginning in summer, leaders of the predominantly Ede minority churches were summoned by local authorities, told their churches were illegal and ordered to disband their church organizations. Many were threatened with dire consequences if they did not comply.

In addition, church leaders were specifically prohibited from any further religious activity outside their own homes, according to Compass Direct. All communal activities of the churches — worship,

teaching, prayer for the sick, observing holy days, administering sacraments, performing baptisms, weddings and funerals — were forbidden. Leaders were forced to sign statements of compliance.

Government authorities had reluctantly tolerated the existence of Montagnard churches for nearly 20 years, although there were many restrictions. In February 2001, however, several thousand Montagnards surprised local authorities by demonstrating against the illegal loss of their lands to ethnic Vietnamese settlers and against the lack of religious freedom.

Heavy-handed crackdowns

Waves of heavy-handed crackdowns followed, along with brutal campaigns to force Christians to sign documents agreeing to give up their faith. Many fled into the forest or to Cambodia.

However, this latest move against churches in Dak Lak is the most severe persecution since 1975, when churches were closed and church leaders put in re-education camps for years.

The ECVN(S), which has usually been very cautious about speaking out against abuses, went public this time. The ECVN(S) president, Duong Thanh, has written a frank and detailed letter to Vietnam's prime minister and to other relevant government agencies.

According to Compass Direct, the letter describes the persecution and points out how government actions are contrary to the constitution and to specific promises made by Vietnam's Religious Affairs Bureau. The letter concludes by asking the prime minister and relevant government bodies for immediate redress.

Earlier complaints addressed to local authorities by the ECVN(S) have resulted in increased pressure and persecution. Authorities seized church leaders at will and took them to unknown destinations. They confiscated church furniture, Christian books, Bibles and musical instruments, and then sealed off or took over the simple chapels where Christians met. Officials have entered chapels while Christians were worshiping and

harangued Christians to give up their faith.

Local Dak Lak television is reported by many to have broadcast "Ceremonies of Voluntarily Renouncing Christianity" and has shown pictures of Christians "voluntarily" giving their Bibles and songbooks to be burned.

"All the Christians I met greeted me with tears, asked me to pray with them and then hurried me on my way lest something untoward happen to me," said a recent visitor to the area. "Even some sympathetic government officials received me with tears, recognizing the overwhelming sadness of what is happening."

The United States Commission on International Religion Freedom in September recommended that the U.S. State Department name Vietnam as a "country of particular concern" — the worst category for abusers of religious freedom. Yet even seasoned observers of the religious liberty abuses in communist Vietnam are surprised at the ferocity in the latest persecution of Christians.

Church

Massive protests against anti-conversion bill in India

Abhijeet Prabhu

BANGALORE, India (Compass) — More than 6,000 educational institutions operated by churches remained closed and over a million Christians participated in fasting and prayer on October 24 to protest the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Forcible Conversion of Religion bill.

Despite the effort, the state legislative assembly approved the ordinance and on October 31 the anti-conversion bill formally became law in Tamil Nadu state.

The anti-conversion bill has stirred religious tensions in the state, with Hindu groups retaliating against Christians and other

minorities who joined the protest against the new law. The Tamil Nadu government issued notices to educational institutions asking administrators to explain why they closed without government approval. The Madras High Court ruled that the school closures were illegal and state authorities warned of a cut in grant money to minority institutions.

Hindus could take over Christian schools

Furthermore, a leader of the fundamentalist Hindu Munnani organization said that if the schools closed in protest, scores of Hindu organizations exist which would

readily take them over.

On October 22, a Christian missionary filed a petition in the Madras High Court asking that the bill be declared void and unconstitutional on the grounds that it violates freedom of religion as guaranteed under the Constitution of India. The petitioner, a 70-year old pastor, contended that the anti-conversion ordinance was detrimental to socially, educationally and economically deprived communities. He also said it would become a tool in the hands of Hindu fundamentalists and political bureaucrats to prevent voluntary conversions from one religion to another.

The Prohibition of Forcible Conversion imposes a fine of up to Rs 50,000 (\$1,034) and three years imprisonment for anyone who coerces religious conversions. The penalties increase to four years in prison and Rs 100,000 if the conversion involves women, minors, members of backward castes or tribal peoples.

Solidarity among minorities

In a major show of solidarity among minorities, Muslims and Dalits (Untouchables) stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Christians to support the one-day closure of educational institutions, demanding

repeal of the law. All Christian denominations including the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of South India (CSI) and Pentecostal churches participated.

Meanwhile, Christian leaders met with the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, J. Jayalalitha, and urged her to reconsider the law. The group "told her that there were enough laws in the land to prevent forcible conversion and we did not need another, particularly at a time when religious polarization is taking place."

"We told her that we were more worried about its misuse than its use," a spokesman said.

Christians in India celebrate 1950 years since St. Thomas brought gospel

Anto Akkara

NEW DELHI, (ENI) — Three major Christian organizations in India came together for a celebration of Christian unity in Delhi at the weekend, while 3,000 km away Christians celebrated the anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in India almost 2,000 years ago.

"Christianity has been here from the 1st century, when most parts of Europe were pagan," said Geevarghese Mar Coorilos, president of the National Council of Churches in India, one of the sponsors of the Delhi festival. "We are part and parcel of this nation."

Christianity is said to have been brought to India by St. Thomas, who reached the coast of Kerala in AD 52. To commemorate the 1950 years since the apostle's arrival in the region, the Catholic church in the state organized a celebration at Kochi, in Kerala.

The Indian president, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and other political leaders, including Kerala's chief minister, A. K. Antony, took part in the celebrations, which attracted more than 100,000 Catholic



The Evangelical Church of India's seminary in Madras (Chennai).

participants.

Meanwhile in Delhi, the Masihi Mahotsav, or Christian Festival, was opened by one of India's most senior Christian leaders, octogenarian Baselios Marthoma Mathew II, Catholicos of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

It was the first time that the Evangelical Fellowship of India, a forum of more than 100 evangelical church groups, joined the NCCI, which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant churches — and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India in organizing such an event.

India churches show phenomenal growth

John Lindner

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia (ANS) — The churches of India are growing faster than the churches of South Korea, according to a mission leader from India.

P. G. Vargis, founder and leader of Indian Evangelical Team, told Christian Aid that India has 10 churches with 10,000 or more members and 30 churches with 3,000 or more members. As an

example of the readiness of India's people to accept Christ, he mentioned that Ezra Sargunam, Bishop of the Evangelical Church of India (OMS), baptized 2,231 people on a single day in 1999.

Vargis said that IET missionaries baptized 11,700 people in 2001, not including the 10,000 who made a professions of faith in crusades he conducted personally. Through the outreach of his workers, someone

comes to Christ every 10 minutes, someone else is baptized every 42 minutes, and an average of one church is planted every day.

When Christian Aid started assisting IET about 25 years ago, it had only about 60 workers. Vargis began the work in 1971; today, he told Christian Aid, it has 2,088 missionaries and a total of 3,250 churches.

Tribal Christians in India pressured to 're-convert'

Abhijeet Prabhu

BANGALORE, India (Compass) — India's most threatened Christian community, the Dang tribals of Gujarat state, is once again facing the wrath of militant Hindus, this time openly led by a government minister who warned Dang children "to decide whether they want to live as Hindus or die as Christians."

The recent spate of ethnic cleansing against the Muslims of Gujarat may soon also be unleashed against Dang Christians unless the central government immediately intervenes, say church and intelligence sources.

Systematic persecution began in the Dang tribal belt during Christmas 1998, when a number of Christians were attacked and churches burned. Meanwhile, the political machinery of the state remained mute.

Minister of state threatens Dang Christians

Now a senior minister of the state has issued threats against Dang Christians, as Hindus are being asked to reclaim territory for their god Rama on the basis of a legend touted in pamphlets circulated by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, or World Hindu Council).

The pamphlets claim that the predominantly Christian area of Subir is the actual site where a man called Shabri met god Rama and fed him fruits.

Sources say that the controversy is a powder keg waiting to explode, as in Ayodhya, North India, where militant Hindus used a similar strategy to try to confiscate a Muslim mosque and convert it into a Hindu temple.

Patel threatened Christian missionaries among the Dang on October 21, telling them "to give up luring tribals." He warned the missionaries to "behave" or else "experience another spell of riots, this time targeting foreign-funded Christians."

Tribal children of Christians, who are boarders at a school run by the Navjyoti Social Service Society, have been threatened and told "to decide whether they want to live as Hindus or die as Christians."

"Dang is a Hindu area since Lord Rama came here to look for Sita," Patel said. "It was here that Shabri waited for the Lord and it is our dream to stop the conspiracy of foreigners to lure tribals in this belt, for this is our Hindu legacy."

Sources in Gujarat point out that no candidate of the BJP, the pro-Hindu political party ruling the state, has won an election from the Dang district since independence in 1947. They cite this as the real reason why nationalist Hindus have targeted tribal Christians there.

World Religions

The inner and outer life of three Abrahamic faiths

A personal report on a conference on Islam

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Last week, I attended a conference on the inner and outer life of Islam. It was sponsored by the Brock University Philosophical Society. My friend Peter Schurman, Christian Reformed campus minister at Brock, had alerted me to the conference, and, since I am retired and I have a bit more time available to me for such extra-ordinary events, I decided to attend. Besides, I am leading a World Religion course at my church and need to be kept informed as much as possible.

Let me sketch a few impressions I gained while attending this conference.

One of the first talks I attended was given by Susan Howard-Azze, a middle-aged Catholic woman who had married a Palestinian Muslim. That in itself is, of course, an interesting predicament. She told us that she remains a Catholic, but that getting married to a Muslim had raised all kinds of issues that needed to be settled before marriage. Apparently, she and her husband agreed that the children were to be brought up as Muslims. By now, these children are in their upper teens and seem to thrive as Muslims. We were told that they look forward to Ramadan each year, which is a holy month when Muslims are expected to fast from sunrise to sunset. (Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and begins on November 6 this year.) Muslims can have an early breakfast and late supper, but nothing in between. The children wanted the experience of holiness, said the mother.

Little choice

Howard-Asse made it look as if she and her husband had engaged in an amicable discussion about all these things and had worked them out to the satisfaction of both. However, in the course of the public and private discussions that followed a different picture emerged. One of the Muslim scholars in attendance told me that a Muslim man is allowed to marry a woman from another religion without insisting that she convert to Islam, but a Muslim woman may not marry a man from another religion. It has to do with the concept of headship. Since the Muslim man is the head of the family, the wife owes him obedience and the children must be brought up Muslim. That kind of arrangement would not work for a Muslim woman, who would have to be obedient to, let's say, a Christian man, and

whose children might well grow up Christian.

When I discussed this matter with a Jesuit scholar during lunch hour, he and I agreed that the agreement between the Muslim man and the Catholic woman had pretty much been predetermined by Muslim teachings and would not have had quite the voluntary character the woman had made us believe. Judging by the age of her children, Howard-Asse must have married fairly young (we guessed around the age of 20). This observation elicited the following remark from the Jesuit scholar and priest, "I have yet to meet a 20-year-old who would understand all the complexities of such an arrangement."

One-sided compromise

Someone in the audience asked Howard-Asse why she had not converted to Islam. After all, by her own admission she spends more time in the mosque than she does in the church of which she is a member, and she participates in all the prayers and festivities of her husband's faith. Her answer to the question was: "I'm somewhat of a rebel, I do not like it when people tell me what my faith is supposed to be." The Jesuit scholar, who followed her in the program, felt the urge to mildly rebuke her when he started his speech by remarking: "When you pray the Lord's prayer and say, 'Thy Kingdom come,' you are saying, 'my kingdom go.'"

One comment in particular had intrigued me in Howard-Asse's talk. She had said that she did not have to give up anything as a Catholic in the arrangement they had made, but her husband would have had to give up a lot if the children would have been brought up Catholic or if he would have had to convert to Christianity. I asked her to clarify that statement. She said more or less the following (I do not recall the exact words), "Well, Islam is a continuation of Christianity. Islam embraces all of the biblical prophets and even considers Jesus the Messiah. So by becoming part of the continuation, I do not lose what Christianity has to offer. But my husband would have to take a step back and lose the riches of Islam." My answer to that was: "But for Christians, Jesus is the ultimate prophet and the fulfillment of all biblical prophecy. For me to take your route, I would have to deny Christianity."

"But Jesus himself said that he had to die so that another prophet would come to take his place," replied Howard-Asse. "Jesus was

talking about the Holy Spirit," I replied.

"But some scholars think that it refers to the coming of the prophet Mohamed," she ventured. She went on to explain that being a Catholic for her was more an emotional attachment to her childhood than a theological position. "We all serve the same God anyway."

Relativism revisited

Susan Howard-Azze's talk and the exchange that followed made me realize again how clever the human heart is in deceiving itself. I prefer to hear a Muslim speak about the convictions of her or his heart rather than to listen to a pseudo-Christian wax eloquent about the significance of a seemingly mature approach to religion and to life.

Of course, this theme of the relativity of different beliefs is a rather common thread in discussions about religion today. At this conference, it was the Christians who stressed the relativity of the various faiths. But I did not hear many Muslim speakers talk that way, though they acknowledged the value of interfaith communications. No doubt, the Philosophical Society of Brock had asked only Christian speakers who were sympathetic to Islam.

The Jesuit priest I mentioned earlier was a convert from Islam. But his talk revealed a definite Buddhist take on the significance of faith. Ovey Mohanned S.J. spoke on "The Inner Life of a Muslim." His talk showed a lot of knowledge about his former faith. But his conclusion was not far removed from the position taken by the Catholic woman who had married a Muslim. He indicated that for him the journey of faith is best when it is based on intuitive experience. "Sufism [an Islamic mystic stream] is the same as Jesuit spirituality," he said. Both seek a sudden, overwhelming experience of the divine. "The priority question for the 21st century is not theology," he added, "but how can we improve life? Whatever takes you to the other side is a raft. When you get to the other side, don't carry the raft on your back." In other words, don't worry about the content of your religion. Just get to the other side (visions and experience of God) and leave it at that.

Identity questions

I also attended a workshop on the "Images of the Veil." Dr. Kathy Bullock, an Australian-born Muslim scholar talked about the way



Daryl Cagle cartoon

the Western media uses the image of the veil to demonize Islam. The head scarf (hijab) worn by many Muslim women and the scarf and veil (burqa) worn by women in such countries as Afghanistan and Pakistan are seen as being against Canadian values.

She argued that not all Muslim women wear a head scarf and that it remains a matter of personal choice. She herself wears a hijab because she sees it as a sign of modesty, a mark of Muslim identity and an act of obedience to the Koran. She reminded the audience that various Christians groups encourage women to cover their heads. Why this preoccupation with Muslim dress? We were told that males show their Muslim identity and obedience by growing a beard.

Although I could see that the Western media have focused too negatively on the hijab, I thought there was a contradiction between her saying that it was a woman's personal choice and the fact that the Koran presents it as an obligation. Besides, we know from stories emerging from several Muslim countries that a lot of Muslim clergy want to make the wearing of the hijab compulsory. It's difficult for the Western media to not see some form of oppression of women in these outward symbols.

Islamic wisdom

The weekend event ended on Saturday evening with a lecture

given by Professor Mahmoud Ayoub of Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mahmoud talked mostly about the inner life of Islam. What struck me about this scholar was that he said many things that a Reformed Christian could have said. He was, of course, talking within the context of Islam. Among some of his comments I could strongly identify with were the following: "Islam is much more the religion of community than it is the religion of the individual." "A true Muslim lives in society, not like a hermit." "Inner Islam is not separate from outer Islam, but is the interiorization of Islam." "All of creation submits to the will of God." "The heavens and the earth respond in obedience to the divine will." "Plants and animals show God's laws for nature." "God made a covenant with all of humanity, when he asked 'Am I not your Lord?'" "God affirmed his sovereignty as creator and sustainer of the universe." "The true nature of Islam is to live continuously in the presence of God." "No religion came nicely packaged to a community. Religion is a joint venture between God and us." I found myself nodding every time he uttered one of these statements.

Honest admission

What truly endeared me to the man was his absolute honesty. He admitted that Islam had lost much of the inner life. Right-wing fundamentalism has also affected the

World Religions/Family

Muslim world. When people speak of "Jihad" they forget that nine of the 10 stages of Jihad have to do with the inner life of the Muslim. Only the tenth has to do with military might, which is not to be used in a destructive way.

Islam has to recover a good combination of religion and secularism, said Mahmoud. He mentioned how in the past, during the golden age of the Ottoman empire, Jewish and Christian scholars worked side by side with Muslim scholars. He himself longed for a return to a humanistic (I think he meant, "learned and tolerant") Islam.

"We need to worship God as though we see him," said this scholar, who, by the way, is blind and spoke extemporaneously, quoting liberally from the Koran and the Bible. "We have become insecure ever since the West has become powerful," he said, "and this has made us less tolerant and less willing to search for the truth."

Muslims and Christians must together search for the truth without any of them becoming dominant. Islam has to be reformed," he added, "so that we can give back to the West what we used to have."

The Messiah

Mahmoud saw this search as one that would continue "until the return of the Messiah." This last phrase surprised me. Upon further inquiry, I learned that Muslims, too, are looking for the return of the Messiah. How can that be? Sure, they recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, unlike the Jews. But they do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God nor that he died on the cross to save us from our sins. The whole idea of a triune God goes against Muslim thinking anyway. There is only one God, they keep on saying, and they mean to counteract with that statement the Christian belief which also talks about one God, but a God who

manifests himself in three persons.

Muslims do not accept the fact that an important prophet like Jesus would have to die an ignominious death on the cross. The idea of the crucifixion of God's prophet and Messiah is to horrid to contemplate for them. In fact, the pseudo-Catholic lady had told us that some scholars believe that Simon the Cyrene, who carried the cross for Jesus, had ended up on the cross instead of Jesus. But the followers of Jesus never noticed the switch. Yeah, right!

Radical difference

So why are Muslims looking forward to the return of the Messiah? Because that will usher in the Kingdom of Allah. And it is this kingdom and this particular faith that the Muslim community sees as the ultimate religion, the religion that succeeded Christianity and perfected it. Mahmoud Ayoub left us no doubt where his loyalties lie. For all his appreciation for

Christianity, he considers Islam as being superior to Christianity. I learned later that this man grew up a Muslim, converted to Christianity and then years later came back to Islam.

When he spoke about reforming Islam, he mentioned that there was no word for "revolution" in the Arab language. For a minute I thought I was back in Holland and hearing my elders talk about the anti-revolutionary principle of the Reformation. In fact, these Dutch Reformed people had established the Anti-Revolutionary Party out of the conviction that historical change should never be revolutionary. But I was awakened by Mahmoud's remark that Islam itself is the only revolution needed in this world. Ouch! Good for him, though. I liked listening to him a lot better than listening to the "I surrender all" Catholic lady who more or less laid claim to being a bridge over troubled waters.

I learned a lot about Islam, and I

realized again that Christians have a duty to be more charitable to and understanding of the essence of Islam, while at the same time being alert to the horrific malformations that have made Islam such a dangerous religion of our time. It's true, when you talk about Judaism, Islam and Christianity, you are talking about three Abrahamic faiths and about three religions which have a high regard for the biblical prophets. We need to continue to talk and bring the light of God to bear on what through the centuries has developed into an unhappy confrontation. We need to deal respectfully with each other.

But we should never engage in these talks as if the goal could be the uniting of these faiths. There is no common ground to stand on when it comes to religious unity. The crucial (forgive this happy pun) point of contention will always be "Christ crucified for our sins."

Maintaining family ties when you're miles apart

Lisa M. Petsche

My family recently returned from a week's vacation in Florida. Those who don't know us well assumed our purpose was to visit Disney World. What actually drew us down there, though, was a desire to visit my older sister and her husband.

They used to live nearby, but business opportunities lured them south eight years ago, when my daughters were three and one. To the girls, they became invisible people who sent birthday and Christmas gifts, and with whom they spoke on the phone periodically. My son was born the following year, and it felt strange to think Cecile and Philip knew him only through photos and my descriptions.

Eventually they began annual visits here, once they got established and obtained the necessary paperwork. Still, my children lacked a true sense of where their aunt and uncle lived and what their life was like. And they hadn't met Maggie, their cherished golden retriever.

A few solo treks

After making a few solo treks to Florida, I vowed to my husband and kids that the next trip would include all five of us.

As I expected, our seven-day stay was action-packed and memorable. Together we went to the beach, collected caterpillars,



ALAN DORRIS/SEN

There are many ways to keep connected with relatives who are far away.

walked, groomed and played with Maggie, did homework, played games and puzzles, watched movies, shopped, went to parks, shared many meals, attended church

most of my family. For some people, staying close to home or returning after a period of time away means sacrificing career opportunities and changing their lifestyle.

service and even participated in the water aerobics class Cecile teaches.

From now on, when the kids communicate with Aunt Cecile or Uncle Philip, they'll be able to put them into context, envisioning their home, neighborhood, and typical activities.

In today's highly mobile society, it's increasingly common for members of a family to be scattered geographically. They may see each other only once a year or less.

I consider myself fortunate to live in the same area as

Priorities can shift over time, though, especially once a person gets married and has children.

There are many advantages to having extended family nearby. Practically speaking, it means grandparents or other relatives are available for babysitting and other kinds of help. Conversely, adult children are in a position to assist frail parents or grandparents with errands and household tasks. Close contact with grandchildren can also help ease a widowed parent's loneliness and provide a sense of purpose.

Emotional and spiritual support

Other advantages of strong family ties include: emotional and spiritual support from people with similar values and beliefs; an identity-affirming feeling of belonging; the validation and enjoyment that comes from sharing memories, some perhaps long-forgotten; and the sense of continuity that comes from knowing one's roots. Intergenerational contact also fosters an appreciation for the rewards and challenges that each life stage brings.

Fortunately, there are many ways to keep connected with relatives who are far away, including the following:

- Post photos of them around your home — on the refrigerator door, mantel, etc.
- Peruse family albums with

your children, sharing memories.

- Regularly send photos and share information about the kids' current activities and interests, to keep relatives up-to-date.

- Set up a schedule of regular phone calls. Also have your child call right after receiving a gift or attending a special event, while his or her excitement level is high.

- Mail artwork, local news clippings and favorite cartoons.

- Create and send a cassette tape of your child singing favorite songs, reciting a verse, giving a speech, telling jokes or describing a special occurrence.

- Videotape events such as birthday parties, recitals, sporting events and awards ceremonies (borrow or rent a camera if necessary) and send a copy.

- If both households are online, correspond by e-mail, send digital photos, and scan drawings and school work — for example, a short story or poem, a perfect test or a glowing report card.

- Call just prior to or during special occasions and let them know they're in your family's thoughts.

While it's possible to have a close relationship without being geographically close, a concerted, ongoing effort at both ends is required. It pays off, though. And when you're lucky enough to be together in person, those times are all the more enjoyable and meaningful for all of you.

Humor

The Haircut

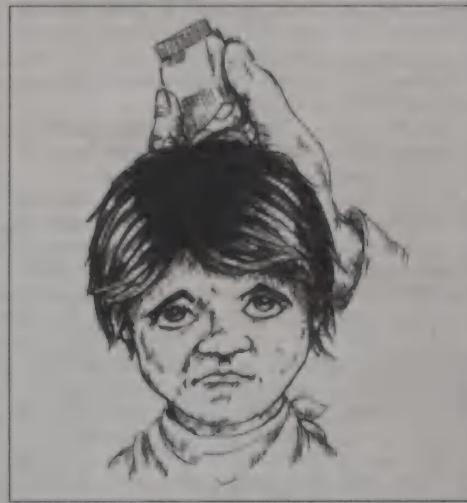
Ron De Boer

One of the weirdest mysteries of the human body — but one that gets the most attention, I think — has to be that silly stuff that grows out of the tops of our skulls. Hair. We comb it, brush it, flip it back, pat it down, feather it to the side, highlight it, shampoo and conditioner it, spray it, gel it, braid it and every couple of months, sit in a chair and let some stranger with a pair of sharp scissors stand behind us and cut it.

Aside from the dentist, the trip to the barber had to be the worst torture a boy growing up in the seventies had to endure. Given the choice to pick stones one-handed all day in the blistering sun or getting my hair cut, you'd find me out in the field every day of the week.

Part of the reason my brothers and I hated haircuts had to be our barber, Mr. Miller, who surely served as official barber of the Canadian army during World War II. Every haircut he ever dealt was a close shave up the back of the neck. He'd leave a little blond crop on top — just enough to allow our mother to lick her fingers and pat down before afternoon church.

Miller had the classic red, blue and white barber's pole which spiralled upward endlessly in front of his storefront. Your imagination allowed you to see it from miles away, and you could smell the various hair tonics and shaving creams before you stepped out of the big green Buick. Or so it seemed. My mother would sit us in the waiting room and then one-by-one we'd be summoned to the chair. It was an ongoing debate whether being first or last made any difference about how much hair you'd have cut off. My mother wouldn't want to return



again for a few months so she instructed Miller to buzz us generously; we wanted some hair to fall over our ears like our "Canadian" friends. Our mother felt that short hair was the sign of respect; we wanted our hair to fall out of our hockey helmets like Paul Henderson.

I'd watch in horror as Miller pushed my brother's head down so that his chin was nearly touching his chest. Then out came the clippers, sounding like a big deranged Northern Ontario mosquito. Every skull was a fresh lawn for Miller. He'd tilt his head and shave with the concentration of a surgeon. When my now unrecognizable brother was released, Miller turned his slick smile and shiny hair in my direction. I'd climb onto the board he'd placed across the gel-green barber's chair. He'd tie a cape around my neck and give the cord a little tug as he tied the bow — just to show me who was boss. This guy had to have worked in the underground strangling people in the night.



HARRY DFR/NEDERLANDEN/ILLUSTRATIONS (2)

My mother sat nearby watching her four sons transform from The Beatles into little Christian Reformed ministers. We rode silently home, running the palms of our hands up the back of our necks and heads, feeling the bristles tickle our palms. It would take a half a year to look decent again!

One summer my mother decided to purchase a special hair-cutting device she'd no doubt seen advertised somewhere. It was an all-in-one scissors-comb gadget that promised a beautiful mane. Really it was a comb with a razor sharp blade at the base of the teeth. You combed your hair and got a hair cut at the same time. She introduced us to this new-fangled thing one summer afternoon, luring us to the veranda with the promise of no-more-Miller.

We complied, of course, but only because Mom was wielding the comb-scissors and possessed a wild look in her eyes. She sat us on a chair on the veranda and began "combing." The trouble began when the comb kept getting stuck and my mother had to jerk it out of our hair. To make up for the "mistakes," she had to comb through the now uneven locks, where the comb, again, caught a snag, and which my mother, again, had to jerk out of our hair. My brother — the sucker! — who had volunteered to go first, had this horror stricken look on his face but endured it all. We got a taste of what his bald head would look like in a few years. If it weren't summer holidays, I don't think he would have come out of that bathroom until his hair had all grown back. He looked like one of those early century dolls you find at antique auctions.

My mother hates my "graduation hair" to this day and you'd think I'd never received my high school diploma if you were to judge the row of graduation pictures of my brothers and I in the family rec room. There are my three brothers in their school colors, diploma resting across their chests. There's me in my "graduation" picture — a too-small suit with the straight short hair with which I came into this world.

But Karen thought I looked kind of good that year, and today I owe my 16-year marriage to that *Toni Home Perm Kit*.

Today I hardly need to address my head in the morning. My hairline's receding and I keep it short enough that a couple of strokes with the brush does the trick for the day. I hardly glance at it again. Once in a while the girls have a contest to see how many berets they can get into my hair. They twist and pull and tie elastics around tightly, and I, with the training of one of Miller's victims — clench my teeth and don't let on I'm in pain. Once I fell asleep while they were working their magic. I was startled awake by a knocking at the door a few minutes later. When I stumbled down the stairs and opened the door, the woman's eyes flew straight to the top of my head. It was then that I realized the girls' red and pink berets were still clenched into the various tufts of hair on my skull. She smiled quickly and hurried down the driveway not even attempting to sell me whatever was on the pamphlet she was holding.

I now watch my girls spending hours with their hair. I've learned from them that an entire mood can be created depending on the approval rating of one's own hair. Hair is such an expression of the girls' individuality. Not so with my buddies. When you line up my friends, we look like emerging cue balls. What's left of it is turning grey, which isn't so bad if you read Proverbs: "Grey hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life."

It's mystifying that men go bald. We hit adulthood and our hair falls out. It might have something to do with wives! When my hair finally does go, I won't be one of those guys who combs the 20 or 30 strands back over their heads to hide their baldness. Come on, guys, you're not fooling anyone. You're follicly-challenged and you'd do well to stop denying it. When the wind blows and you've got a strand that hangs down to your belt buckle, you're terrifying small

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Humor/Deafness

children. Shave it off. We came into the world nearly bald, we may as well go out smooth, too.

In Matthew, Jesus says, "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." According to the American Association of Hair, we have the potential to grow 120,000 hairs on our scalps. Blondes, believe it or not, have up to 40,000 more hairs than red heads. You and I lose about 80 hairs a day. For some people, these

grow back. You may not be able to count them, but God knows. The job is getting easier for Him with me!

In the old days, locks of hair were cut off, braided and given to loved ones to be remembered. My mother has one such lock — from her mother whom she never knew — and I know it's a possession that she values highly.

Today, forensic experts can know everything there is to know about you from your hair. A single

hair from your pillow can provide police with enough DNA to track your comings and goings for days.

In Judges, Samson's hair was the source of all his strength.

When it was cut off, he was weak and vulnerable. I know cancer patients who feel the same way when they lose their hair during chemotherapy treatments. Their hair loss is a constant reminder that their bodies have been invaded

and that they are fighting off the disease.

One of my favorite hair stories comes in Luke when the prostitute anoints Jesus' feet and wipes them dry with her long hair. The Pharisees are enraged and want to remove her from Jesus' presence, but Jesus blesses the woman's action. Using one of the adornments of her trade — her hair — she weeps in repentance and dries Jesus' feet.

Later in Luke, Jesus tells his followers that "All men will hate you because of me." But then he reassures them with the faith we Christians all trust in: "But not a hair of your head will perish." Think of it. Not one of those 120,000 hairs will perish for those who believe in Jesus.

Not even those of us with balding pates; not even those of us who've lost our hair as a result of cancer treatment.

I can hear you now

...continued from page 6

Often he would suddenly scream, when he did not see his mom close by: "Mommy, where are you!?" The normal household noises like the ringing of the telephone, the flushing of a toilet or the humming of a vacuum cleaner had disappeared from his formerly safe and secure little world.

"Picture yourself listening to the radio, and all you hear are some far-away voices, drowned out by lots of static. It drives you crazy, and you turn the radio off. But that is what your little guy has to cope with every minute of the day," his parents were told.

Levi loved to go for a sleep-over at the home of Paul's parents or at our house, but soon he was too scared to stay away overnight. While visiting during the day, he would want to call his parents on the telephone, but walk away, totally frustrated, after shouting, "Please speak louder, I can't hear you!"

Temper tantrums and nightmares

He began to have temper tantrums and nightmares, and would often sneak into his parents' bedroom at night, too insecure to sleep in his own bedroom.

Both sets of grandparents tried to help, but there was little we could do. The time was past that we could babysit at night to give his parents a much-needed break away from him, for Levi became hysterical if his mom and dad went away at night. Once I babysat during the day. Levi took off on his small bike and there was a busy intersection close by. I called him to come back, but realized immediately that he could not hear me. The Lord gave me wings, for I just caught up with him when he was about to cross the road. I grabbed his bike and tried to explain to him that he had to come back, but of course he could not



Levi, age six, with visible hearing aids, before getting a cochlear implant.

COURTESY: BERTA HOSMAR

understand me. He kicked and screamed, then he threw his bike on the grass and started to sob as if his little heart would break. I sat down beside him, stroking his back, close to tears myself and thinking: "All creation groans..." After a while Levi calmed down and quietly walked back to his house, a sad, dejected-looking little boy. One day he told his parents: "When I go to Grade Two, I can hear again, for I prayed to God to make my ears all better." How do you tell a small child who can barely hear you

when you shout into his hearing aids, that God does not always answer prayers the way we would like Him to?

Finally, in November, 2001, the day of Levi's surgery arrived. Levi's speech was rapidly deteriorating, and the doctor could not wait any longer. Many prayers were sent up to God that day. The surgery went well, and Levi could return home the next day. After the wound had healed, the most difficult part would come. "The sounds Levi will hear after we connect the

implant to the computer, will at first sound like Russian to him," his parents had been told.

"Levi's case is rather unique, for he lost his hearing so rapidly, and he has speech. Frankly, we don't know how long it will take for the brain to 'translate' the sounds he will hear into language. It could be hours or days or even weeks. But we have to take his hearing aids away immediately."

A disaster

That fateful day was a disaster. He could not understand a word of what was said to him. He became hysterical with fear and kept screaming: "Don't talk French to me, I can't understand you, I want my hearing aids back!!"

It took all of his exhausted parents' resources to calm him down. They tried to follow the instructions the hospital had taught them. They let him play with his computer. They would point to the Christmas tree and say slowly: "Tree, Levi, tree," or point to the piano and say: "Piano, piano," but nothing worked. He kept begging for his hearing aids and kept crying: "You are all talking French to me, I want my hearing aids, please give them back to me." It was almost more than his parents could bear. Fervent prayers were sent up to God's throne.

Answer to prayer

And God answered. A few hours later the phone rang. "A miracle happened!!" our daughter cried. "He can hear us. In desperation we finally gave him his homework. He has been taught to say words like: DOG, CAT, HOUSE, etc, out loud, while reading them. When he saw the words in front of him, and said them out loud, something suddenly connected in his brain. "I can hear myself, I can hear you!!" he cried over and over again. He's shouting to his brothers

that he can hear them, and now he's playing a tune on the piano." Then we hear Levi's little voice on the telephone. "When I come over to your house, you can read me a story, for I can hear you now. And listen to my new song on the piano, I made it up myself!" It was literally music to our ears.

Not there yet

Levi is not there yet. On a routine visit to the hospital the batteries of his computer went dead. Instantly he became frightened and asked the doctor: "Are you going to cut another hole in my head?" It will take more time and effort to make him feel secure again. He now attends a school where he and two other deaf children get extra lessons from an itinerant teacher for the hearing-impaired. He has fallen behind in Grade One, for he often missed much of what was taught in the classroom, even while wearing his hearing aids and using the F.M. system. He now gets extra tutoring and his parents help him with his reading every night, for the people who work with Levi have told the parents that letting him repeat Grade One would be devastating for his already severely damaged self-esteem. At night, when going to bed, he has to take off his implant, and also when he goes swimming. Then Levi is totally deaf again. And can the auditory nerves in his brain also get sick, so the implant won't work anymore? Questions we don't know the answer to. But we do know that Levi has been given time in the hearing world and he is now rapidly learning to read and to write. And we can see the happy, carefree little boy slowly emerge again. Thank you, Lord.

Berta Hosmar lives in Whitby, Ont.

See related story on page 17.

Christian Living

Why go to church? 9

To receive the gift of salvation

A.A. van Ruler

This time we set our sights on a major theme that is an entirely new topic – salvation. We have encountered three major themes in previous articles: human existence, which reaches its high point in praise; being or the reality of the world, which we decipher and act out in the liturgy of worship; and sin, the fact that we are sinners, where we discover who we are and that we must openly discover, reveal and declare ourselves in confessing our sin.

Existence, being, sin – these are awesome realities. Each has its own significance in answering the question, 'Why go to church?' We really don't go just to get saved. This isn't even the first and most important reason. We also go to praise God, to pray for the world and to confess our sin.

Something even more awesome

But if we want to give a complete answer to our question, we must also emphatically answer that we also go to church to receive salvation. That we exist, that there is a world and that evil is sin and sin guilt – these are all awesome realities, but there is something even more awesome: salvation.

What do we understand by that word? It can be said in many ways; the broadest is that we are saved, saved after being lost, saved from eternal perdition. Both man and the world are saved; the soul is not saved from the body, and man is not saved from the world. We are not rescued from temporal, earthly reality. Soul and body, man and world, and the whole of temporal earthly reality are saved from the eternal perdition into which they have fallen.

This message of the New Testament gospel is almost too wonderful to believe. You might say it's almost too wonderful for words. To think that our lives here on earth are not meaningless, lost and doomed but that we can live before the face of God, and for all eternity – this is as great a mystery as being

itself. Being and salvation – both are wonderfully deep and high mysteries.

Powerful forgiveness

Over against this broad definition of salvation we can set the narrower one: salvation means that our sins are forgiven and our guilt and punishment removed from us as far as the east is from the west. God's forgiveness is so powerful that no matter how long and how deep we search for our sins in history and for ourselves as sinners, we will not be able to find them.

Between these two – the broadest (being saved) – and the centre (being forgiven), there are numerous other descriptions of salvation: becoming a child of God, for example; or knowing God, the ground of all being; living in fellowship with him; learning the will of God and receiving the power to do it, albeit stumblingly; receiving eternal life because death has been and is being overcome; living in tremendous expectation of the renewal of all things. We could go on, but these are enough to give an idea of what all is at stake.

Not a waste of time

And it is for all this that we go to church – for salvation in all of its forms and variations. This means that going to church is not a waste of time. It brings dividends, makes life better. We need not shy away from this selfish motive. We also go to church in search of our own personal salvation. As sinners lost for eternity, we must also want our own eternal salvation. As God's creatures, we may not be indifferent to what happens to us.

But why do we need to go to church for this? Because salvation is not in us or from us. As sinners, in and of ourselves we are lost, and we are in no shape to call it into being. Not rational reflection, nor moral exertion, ascetic self-denial, mystical emotion, heroic courage or great lust for life can achieve the slightest degree of genuine redemption.

Even as sinners we remain creatures of God, but redemption is something else altogether.

A specific time and place

This is the negative side. But there is also a positive side: salvation was effected in Palestine, at a specific time and place. It is "accomplished" in the coming of Jesus – in his person, his life, his teachings, his work, his sacrificial death and his resurrection. As the



Jesus rescues Peter as he walks on the water. As the Messiah of Israel, Jesus is the fulfilment of the law and all the promises of the Old Testament. He is the Savior of the world.

Messiah of Israel, he is the fulfilment of the law and all the promises of the Old Testament. He is the Savior of the world.

This is why salvation comes to us wholly, radically "from outside." It comes to us from Israel. It comes to us from the past. It comes in and through the work of Jesus who is the Christ. It is he who, as the Mediator, the middleman, passes it on and out to us.

This passing on of Christ's salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit, but he, too, uses middlemen. He uses the apostles and their descendants – missionaries and ministers of the Word.

What it's all about is getting the story told, the story of what happened in Palestine, the story of the salvation that was accomplished for us. This is the heart of the sermon. A sermon is essentially the

telling of this story. This is how salvation is once again conveyed into the present; it is how God-in-Christ approaches us with his grace.

Why keep coming back?

But then we have to go to where this happens – to church. It happens specifically in the proclamation of the good news. So we go to church to receive salvation in this sense: that is where it is brought to us, and so we go there to get it.

"Right," one might answer, "but then why do I have to keep coming back week after week? Isn't it enough to hear it once? After that you know it."

Suppose someone has such knowledge and has been convicted in the depths of his heart and surrendered himself to his Savior; does someone like that who has been born again need to keep com-

ing back to church? Does he still go to church to receive salvation?

We need to keep coming back all our lives to keep receiving salvation. First of all, because it is so deep and wide. It is so incredibly huge and rich that we cannot begin to comprehend it. We cannot grasp it or keep a hold on it. Even our faith is but a little pail, too small to hold this vast ocean of redeemed reality. So there's only one thing we can do – keep coming back to church to hear the story anew. In this respect, we are just like children who want to hear the same story over and over told in exactly the same way.

Conveyed with authority

Secondly, salvation is something that needs to be conveyed to us with authority, that is, through office bearers. This is true of every

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Christian Living/Sports

story that is based on a real event. It is something that happened, so in order to tell it, someone must have been there to see it. We need eyewitnesses to testify to what happened. This is what the apostles were: eyewitnesses to the great event of Jesus and his resurrection. This is what gives them their apostolic authority, and this authority has been handed down to the offices of the church. The story keeps being told by those authorized to do so as office bearers of the church.

There is another side to the authority of church office. If I have come to see myself as a sinner lost in sin, then it is impossible for me to believe that grace is there for me and that I am invited to be a child of God. If the minister did not tell me this with an authority given him by God, then every working day would be empty and futile. So I go back every Sunday again for the sake of my sanity.

Fourthly, I cannot comprehend salvation; I can hardly believe it; nor can I live it. I want to and I ought to live the new life, for this is how salvation becomes a living reality. This is how what was once wholly alien to me gradually becomes part of me. What was first radically outside me begins more and more to bubble up from inside me. Not that this ever happens wholly and completely; it never becomes entirely integrated into the whole of my life.

Like rain after a dry spell

Salvation keeps its otherness and it always remains outside me. It is like a rain after a long dry spell: it has to rain for a long time before the ground is thoroughly soaked. So we keep walking out into the spring rains of the good news.

In the fifth place, to describe salvation in all its dimensions, in its full height and breadth, length and depth, we need more than one sermon. A minister can preach it again and again all his life and we can listen to it over and over again. New vistas keep opening up. Each time again the various facets of the diamond reflect the light in a new way. And it yields ever new reflections on our part and ever new riches for our spirits.

Even though you've been converted, would you want to miss all this? On the contrary, once you've developed a taste for the mystery of salvation, you want to hear the gospel again and again. Each time you hear something new.

Preaching the Word accomplishes something; it has an effect. It mediates or makes present salvation. God-in-Christ comes to us and we receive salvation. Of

course, although this is the heart, the original meaning of preaching, it can lead in many different directions. It can, for example, mean teaching, instructing, building up the congregation in the treasures of the faith. Or it can simply mean opening up the Scriptures, or prophetically addressing the nation and the government, or lyrically extolling the love of God.

The sermon need not be purely and solely the proclamation of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it may not come to that at all. We must not conceive it too narrowly, for then preaching can become monotonous and boring. But in essence it is the gift of grace.

Accepting and acting on preaching

We must add that it is not up to the sermon to do everything. Although it brings salvation near, we must also accept it. To accept it is more than receiving it. We must not just ask, "What does preaching do for me?" We must also ask, "What do I do with the preaching of the Word?" Or put in other words: "What do I do with God-in-Christ?"

Preaching does not violently batter down the gates of our hearts from the outside. We must - through the inner working of the Holy Spirit - unlock and swing open those gates ourselves to invite into our existence the Lord and his grace. Then I take part in salvation. I participate in it, which means that I must in turn take it. This is what Paul calls the obedience of faith. I humble myself under God's grace, finding my salvation in the Mediator. I allow him to take my place and thereby make him my Savior. I take for my own what is his, what he himself is.

No salvation outside the church

This, too, is part of a full-orbed church-going. In this sense, we can repeat the maxim that outside the church there is no salvation. This has nothing to do with churchly self-aggrandizement; it is true by definition, for the church is the communion of those who participate in salvation because they have received it. So the church is as such communion with salvation.

There is no salvation outside the church because of two closely intertwined reasons. First, because I need the authoritative proclamation of the gospel for salvation to be passed on and offered to me. And secondly, because I must begin to take part in this salvation from my side, willingly and knowingly. For both of these reasons I must be a member of the church to

participate in salvation.

Are we speaking here only of the invisible church? That wouldn't make any sense, for the authoritative proclamation of the gospel can only be a fully visible thing. And we ourselves are hardly invisible. No, it is about the visible, bodily church that we say, apart from her there is no salvation. We must be prepared to acknowledge all the consequences of this insight - and they are tremendous. Think of the conflicts and divisions in the visible church. Think of all the vexations associated with every fellowship and every organization. Being a member of a church is no picnic - not even being a member of the Church. But apart from her, no salvation.

We said that we go to church to receive salvation and this is extended to us in the preaching of the Word. But the liturgy also includes what we call "the declaration of pardon," which also extends God's grace to us. We could argue that the declaration of pardon only involves the forgiveness of sins, so there is still room for a fuller proclamation of salvation. Since we must also take preaching in a broad, comprehensive sense, not purely as the preaching of Christ, it is good that salvation is also extended to us in another form.

It is also important to point out who gives us the proclamation of pardon - the minister of the Word. He does so as the representative of Christ. It requires the authority of the office of minister. So the declaration of pardon radically brings out the authoritative nature of preaching. The preacher must do so in the line of the apostles, for he witnesses to a historical fact that carries the name of Jesus.

At the end of the worship service, besides the proclamation of the Word and the declaration of pardon, there is a third major element: the benediction or parting blessing. From the viewpoint of modern man, this is a strange business. The minister spreads his arms over the congregation to lay on them the blessing, the good words, of God. If he is not acting as a priest, he is certainly discharging an office: he proclaims the blessing of God on the congregation.

With the same sort of simplicity that I could say, "Let's go to church just to sing a psalm to praise my Creator and Redeemer," I might also say, "Let's go to church just to receive God's blessing."

Bowing my head or lifting up my face, I let the soft rain of God's blessing descend upon my life. And so I receive the gift of salvation.

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides



Pom-pom phobia

Penticton Secondary School in Penticton, B.C., didn't have cheerleaders when I went to school there. That was too bad because a lot of people like cheerleading. And what's not to like?

Happy teenagers dressed in bright outfits wave their pom-poms at the crowd. They do somersaults and flips. They move in different formations to form letters and symbols. They do dance routines. They even toss people up and catch them (usually). Who wouldn't like that?

Syrupy, artificial joy

Me, that's who. My threshold for syrupy, artificial joy is low. I don't like being told to be happy or when to be of good cheer. My tolerance for tackiness gets lower every year.

I decided to share these thoughts about cheerleading with one of the English classes I am teaching this fall. A class full of first-year university students, fresh out of high school attending a university in the Midwest. In the heart of America. We were discussing topics for our papers on popular culture, and I mentioned cheerleading as a possibility.

"Maybe one of you could write a paper on the artificiality of cheerleading," I said. "You could talk about how cheerleading reflects the superficial desire of society to sensationalize sports and entertainment."

An eerie silence blanketed the room. Some of the girls' faces flushed. Two guys at the back of the room were hiding their faces in their hands. They knew what was about to happen. A maelstrom is what happened. A howl of protest arose out of the bowels of the classroom. I had derided a cultural symbol. The opposition came mostly in the form of sputtered, defensive protests about how I don't understand cheerleading and how much good it does for a school.

But one young lady calmly and articulately stated her position. "Cheerleading takes incredible fitness, skill, and endurance, which come after months of tough training. It is as much a sport as baseball or football. It brings school spirit and provides entertainment for people. What's wrong with that?"

She was probably right. It does take a lot of talent and it is entertaining. I guess it's just not for me. I sit in the stands at a basketball game and I'm embarrassed for the cheerleaders. That's because I assume that everyone in the crowd views them in the same way I do. Annoying and tacky.

Certain things in church make me cringe, too. When interpretive dancers come up to the front and wave their streamers, I tend to sit lower in my seat. Certain musical soloists make me hide my face in my hands. Because their particular way of worship annoys me, I shut them out.

This isn't good, of course. It actually has a lot to do with selfishness. If something doesn't appeal to my tastes, I dismiss it as ineffective or even embarrassing. This cheerleading thing has forced me to confront one of my inner demons. Just because I don't like something, doesn't mean it can't be used in valuable ways. Cheerleaders may not warm my heart, but they do build self-esteem among themselves. They are every bit a sports team. I may get absolutely nothing out of the hand motions and streamers of interpretive dance, but it means a lot to the people who perform the dance (and probably a few who sit in the pews).

Pom-poms still make me cringe. So do the streamers. But being part of a community means showing support and respect. I may not like what they do, but I need to support the spirit in which they do it. It's called maturity.



Tim Antonides is a teacher and sports coach currently studying in Chicago, Illinois.

News

An unexpected response to war and violence



ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY PETER HART

Peter Hart

Alan Doerksen

HOLLAND, Mich. — Concern over the Bush administration's militaristic attitude toward Iraq has led Peter Hart, of Holland, Mich., to respond in an unexpected way: with a web site called "Let's Expect the Unexpected," which offers nonviolent alternatives to war. The web site (www.Lets-Do-The-Unexpected.org) is one project of Scenorama Studios, an agency which also creates scenarios in which people can interact in Internet "dramas" to find nonviolent solutions to personal, community and international conflicts.

Hart, president of Scenorama, is an attorney by profession, and has extensive training and experience in negotiation and mediation. But he is also a computer industry entrepreneur, and owns Scenorama and provides creative direction to its projects. He is a brother of Hendrik Hart, recently-retired professor at Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies.

Lets-Do-The-Unexpected.org gathers and distributes information about the efficacy of non-violence. The site — created and maintained by Scenorama — states: "We hope the materials will encourage people to be creative in resolving conflicts, knowing that constructive alternatives to violence, although often unexpected, are realistic and effective responses to terror, hate, oppression and injustice."

Concerned with Bush's militarism

"The idea for the site evolved over the summer months," Hart told *Christian Courier*. "We were concerned with the militarism of President Bush's administration and the absence of discussion in the mainstream media about alternatives to violence and war. We thought John Paul Lederach's *Traveling Essay/The Challenge of Terror* provided an important perspective on preventing terrorism and should have been picked up by a paper like the *New York Times*. It

wasn't, so we launched our web site on Sept. 11, 2002."

Lederach's essay is one of several available on the Unexpected web site, which also includes *A Force More Powerful*, by Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall also available on Sojourner's web site on nonviolence (see Oct. 7 CC). According to the web site, Lederach's paper "is our lead article and sparked the name for this web site."

Make terror irrelevant

"The biggest blow we can serve terror is to make it irrelevant," declares Lederach in the paper, which discusses possible responses to terrorism. "The worst thing we could do is to feed it unintentionally by making it and its leaders the centre stage of what we do. Let's choose democracy and reconciliation over revenge and destruction. Let's do exactly what they do not expect, and show them it can work...."

"What they expect from us is the lashing out of the giant against the weak, the many against the few. This will reinforce their capacity to perpetrate the myth they carefully seek to sustain: That they are under threat, fighting an irrational and mad system that has never taken them seriously and wishes to destroy them and their people. What we need to destroy is their myth not their people."

The web site also offers case studies, showing how effective nonviolent approaches can be in resolving conflicts. One example is the nonviolent approach of Mahatma Gandhi which helped India achieve independence from Britain. Another case study explains how Costa Rica became one of the few countries with no army. The army was permanently abolished in the late 1940s by then-leader Jose Maria Figueres Ferrer. "The abolition of the army enabled the state to dedicate more resources to education and health, and made it stand apart from the other Central American nations, which have been besieged by coups d'état, dictatorships, military rulers, and civil wars."

The Lets-Do-The-Unexpected site "is an advocacy and educational web site," explains Hart. "Its purpose is to state the case for the efficacy of nonviolence and provide supporting articles, case notes and links to other resources. Its message is complemented by other web sites being developed by Scenorama Studios." It is also linked to several anti-war pledges, which can be signed by interested people.

Hart observes, "I think North American political leaders are



Scenorama Studios has developed this virtual 3D Lab building for prospective players to register for a conflict simulation. On top is the virtual dome seen at right. In the background is virtual San Francisco.



This (virtual) stained glass dome for the 3D lab building was designed by Willem Hart (Peter's brother) for Scenorama Studios.

becoming more aware every year of the power and efficacy of nonviolent conflict resolution. However, we have a long way to go before non-violence is the prevailing policy for international conflict."

Experiencing dramatic conflict

But Scenorama Studios is working to make that a reality. "I think that it's hard for most people to accept that non-violence is more effective than violence in resolving conflict with enemies such as terrorists and rogue states," Hart admits. "Just stating the proposition is not convincing. Good examples help but are not enough either. I think personal experience is the best persuader for practices like non-violence."

Scenorama Studios creates simulations for people to test, compare and practice, both expected and unexpected responses to conflict situations and discover what produces the outcomes they ultimately value most. Players interact with each other over the Internet as anonymous characters that are free to explore the whole spectrum of possible strategies — from violent to non-violent responses — and arrive at their own conclusions."

How a scenario works

Here is how a scenario conflict simulation works, as explained on Scenorama's website:

"Players with personal computers connected over the Internet create a virtual theatre. Websites provide the stage sets. Actors navigate through a set by clicking on 'hot spots.'

"To engage in a simulation, you register, select a character, receive information about the character and become that character. You

also receive the character's mask so your personal identity remains anonymous and you have an opportunity to experiment with all the possible scenarios, including ones you would not dare to try in real life."

"Each simulation is about a conflict situation between two groups that affects the actors in a deeply personal way. Through a series of decision points, the actors consider all the possible scenarios for advancing their interests, choose a strategy and then experience the consequences of their decision. Each decision creates a new situation with a new set of scenarios and an opportunity to consider new strategies."

"The decisions made by the actors in a conflict group are reported to players who are the editors of the *Conflict Chronicle*, a news publication. The next issue of the *Conflict Chronicle* reports the resulting situation for the next act in the drama and adds editorials and reports of related events."

"Actors accomplish their mission through a set of acts. A single act could take a day or several days as players participate in the discussions ... at moments that suit each player. A simulation may be completed in a few days or take as long as a university semester."

"Each group of actors has access to its own web site and discusses issues and makes decisions using a private forum, e-mail and chat."

Not knowing the outcome

"Characters and news editors participate in the unfolding drama without knowing the eventual outcome. The players create the script for their particular dramatic adventure through their experiences and discussions."

"To help everyone along the way, instructions and reference materials are available before and during play. These consist of character journals, news, backgrounds, articles, Internet sites, videos, movies, art and books."

"The end of a simulation is reached when players have achieved their mission. However, players may reconsider their original mission and focus on emerging process and relationship issues to achieve a final outcome that is satisfying to all."

"The simulations we are developing for the Internet have not yet been used by anyone," says Hart. "We will be conducting our first simulations early in 2003. Our target market is university students. Participating in our first conflict simulation is like taking a university course. However, we also hope to make the experience available directly over the Internet to anyone who wants such an experience."

Useful for political leaders

Hart believes Scenorama's scenarios would be a valuable service for political leaders to use, for instance when considering a possible conflict with another country. "For busy political leaders, we have a more intense and shorter workshop simulation under development. Our Internet simulation is more suited for would-be leaders who are now students and can make more time available."

Hart is a member of Christ Community Church in Spring Lake, Michigan. A graduate of Calvin College, he has been a member of the Christian Reformed Church and also a member of the Episcopal Church. He asserts, "My faith is important to me. It is the source for my values and has led me to do this work."

Opinion/News

Return of the *bakfiets*

Morris N. Greidanus

We've been here a month now and I think I've seen a total of two pickup trucks. Not that there aren't trucks here. Giant diesel monsters from Poland, Turkey, and Germany roar along Dutch highways; equally large Dutch trucks roam theirs.

Huge trucks with building materials cleverly back down narrow Amsterdam streets to deliver their goods — in reverse, I assume, to be more maneuverable. Tradesmen have small vans, or a trailer behind the family car. But few pickup trucks.

Dutch version of pickup truck

The Dutch version of the pickup truck used to be the *bakfiets*, the box on a bike. For small deliveries there was a two wheeler with a three-foot box up front. For larger deliveries there would be a three-wheeler, two wheels up front, seat behind over the rear wheel and pedals, and a box in between the front wheels that could be three-by-five feet to deliver bread



A "cargo-bike" marketed by Bakfiets.nl.

www.BAKFIETS.NL

or milk, or a four-by-seven flatbed with low sides to peddle vegetables or fish, or to move goods.

These vehicles were a familiar sight on city streets. Milk, bread, and vegetables were sold from their door to door. The street sweeper had his twig broom and an all-metal box for dirt. And the junk-man came by checking out the garbage and calling for old clothes to be recycled.

We still see some of the larger models around that folks can rent to move larger items. Some are motorized now, but they used to operate only on muscle and sweat. As boys we'd sometimes help push a *bakfiets* loaded with vegetables up the bridge near the Amsterdam Food Centre.

In the sixties, when quite a number of CRC students did graduate work at the VU (Free University of

Amsterdam), a story was told about some American students who rented a *bakfiets* to move their belongings to a new address. On the way from the rental place they already found the brakes a bit weak.

When their vehicle was heavy with furniture and books it became hard to stop.

"I wonder how Dutchmen manage these things?" the one asked. "I've heard them shout something," the other answered, "that's how they must get the right-of-way."

So they pedaled through Amsterdam with their belongings, shouting "Vodde! Vodde!" (Old rags, old rags!) at each corner. [The cry of the ragman, who was everywhere with his *bakfiets* in those days.]

New shouts sound

In 2002 new shouts sound from boxes-on-a-bike. A revival of the *bakfiets* has taken place. The bike dealer on the corner has several new models with either two wheels or three wheels. They're especially useful for transporting young children and a few bags of groceries. Instead of mini-vans, parents use the new versions of the *bakfiets* to deliver their young to day-care centres and kindergartens. The boxes have seatbelts to keep the kids on board.

Tradesmen are also beginning

to use the *bakfiets* again for nearby jobs that do not require a lot of supplies. There are sturdy models available that will carry a fair amount of tools and move through traffic with the ease of a bicycle. And when the plumber gets to the customer there's no need to search for a parking place: there's always room for a bike.

Parking problems and nostalgia seem to be the main reasons for the *bakfiets* revival. In most of Amsterdam you pay to park and it's expensive — 20 Euro per day, even more in the centre of the city.

It's even more expensive if you are late in paying. The Denver boot, a big yellow clamp, is locked on the offender's front wheel, requiring time and money to get it off. We had that pleasure some years ago; we see them now on several cars each evening with a sympathetic twinge.

The new bikes are not cheap (see www.Bakfiets.nl), but after a few hefty parking fines, the price of 1200 euros does not sound so bad.



Morris Greidanus
is a Canadian-American living in Grand Rapids, Mich., currently visiting Amsterdam.

Can you go to college if you can't hear the professor?

Phil de Haan (with reporting by media relations student writer Abe Huyser-Honig)

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Making the transition from high school to college is often tough. Making it with essentially no hearing is even tougher. But, for first-year Calvin student Nathaniel Veltman, a solid support system is making his first semester in Grand Rapids a good one.

Veltman, a native of Cochrane, Ont., began losing his hearing when he was about five years old. He now is completely deaf in his left ear and has about 25 to 30 per cent of normal hearing capacity in his right ear.

Significant strategies

So how is he adjusting to life at Calvin? He has some significant strategies, tricks he's honed over the years plus assistance in several key areas from Calvin.

For one, Veltman relies on reading lips to understand people. But he is an auditory learner, meaning he learns best by hearing things spoken. So he sits in the front row in every class at Calvin to be sure he can read the professor's lips. But he also gives each of his professors a portable microphone that they wear around their necks. It has a

wireless connection to his hearing aid, and he can adjust the volume with a remote he always keeps in his pocket. The volume control comes in handy; occasionally Veltman has picked up the hungry growl of a professor's stomach.

Veltman also works closely with Calvin's Karen Brockstra, who works with students with disabilities. They touch base regularly through both e-mail and face-to-face meetings to discuss how classes are going, what solutions are working and where different strategies could be implemented.

Residence hall life poses other challenges. To supplement the fire alarm, which he might not hear, Calvin has installed a blinking strobe light in Veltman's room. And to make sure he gets to class on time he has a special vibrating alarm clock under his pillow to shake him out of bed.

While it helps to have his twin brother Ben (who is not hearing-impaired) as his roommate, Veltman says social situations can still be hard to deal with. "It's harder to talk with people in groups, because they go back and forth really fast," he says. Sometimes people don't want to take the time to understand him, or even if they do, they're not sure how to act.

Veltman says it's actually pretty simple: have only one person talk at once, pronounce words clearly so he can read lips. And be patient.

Mephobosheth Scholarship

Veltman is being helped by Calvin financially, including being a recipient of Calvin's Mephobosheth Scholarship. This award is made possible by a donation to Calvin in 1987 by Peter DeKorte (1907-1993), a friend of Calvin who was disabled at the age of two by spinal meningitis and spent the rest of his life as an advocate for the disabled. The name of the scholarship refers to a grandson of King Saul who was crippled in both feet, but who, according to Scripture, ate at the King's table.

Right now Veltman is planning to major in history and geography. When he's not doing homework or working in the library, he enjoys reading and playing basketball with his brothers (his brother Greg is a junior at Calvin) or with his residence hall (his floor, Second Boer, recently won the dorm basketball tournament). He also likes listening to music on his CD player, which he can attach directly to his hearing aid. "Everyone else has to wear those big headphones," he says with a smile.

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News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

MY COLUMN THIS TIME
is a shortened version of my speech to the Belleville Kiwanis on November 12, 2002:

This Hour Has 22 Minutes comes with the disclaimer that not everybody will appreciate this humor. I, too, preface my remarks with a warning that not everybody will agree with my remarks.

A scorpion wanted to cross a river, but could not swim. So he asked a frog to ferry him across. "Certainly not," said the frog, "If I take you on my back, you'll sting me."

"No, I won't," said the scorpion, "because if I do, we'll both drown."

The frog saw the logic in this, so he let the scorpion hop on and struck out across the water.

Half way across he felt a terrible pain. The scorpion had stung him.

As the two of them sank below the ripples, the frog asked the scorpion: "Why on earth did you do that?"

Replied the drowning scorpion, "Because this is the Middle East."

Perhaps this is as good an illustration of the present world as anything. In a sense, we all are the scorpion. The sting that will sink us is the polluting oil we use and the place where it is found; the frog, is the powder keg which is the Middle East. The Middle East is where the black gold is buried, that oily substance that makes our world go round.

We are here with some 50 people. How did we get here? Thanks to oil this place is filled

with successful people. Our success in life depends on the sticky stuff. Thanks to oil or gas, we can sit here in comfort. Thanks to oil, we can live in luxury and have a life that exceeds in physical comfort that of any previous generation.

IS THIS GOING TO LAST?

The short answer is No. There are a number of reasons. Oil is a finite item: we use two barrels of oil for every one added to the reserves. And this imbalance is increasing: China is coming online and they want cars. There are 1.2 billion Chinese, and if only five per cent come to own a vehicle, another 60 million cars will be spouting pollutants into the air. The same is true for another billion in India, and the millions in Russia, the East European countries, everywhere.

When a teenager quits high school and gets a job pumping gas, his first paycheque goes for a down payment on a car. In fully motorized countries 20 per cent of the workforce has a connection to the automotive industry — from insurance agents to traffic cops to ambulance drivers to most workers in the cities of Detroit and Oshawa.

The Middle East is where most of the oil is found and so it is no wonder that it is a combustible point on the globe. And now we are going to have a war there, because Saddam is supposed to have Weapons of Mass Destruction.

THE GREATEST WEAPON
of mass destruction is parked right

in our driveway: a million people are killed each year by our beloved automobile, mostly pedestrians in poor countries where the laws are weak and the highways poor.

Bush has cancelled further research on energy conservation in cars and instead has said that hydrogen is our best bet, even though the infrastructure for this volatile fuel is 30 years away. The American and Albertan administrations have sided with the Enrons of this world to keep the world in an artificially prolonged state of dependence.

America needs the oil. Iraq has the second largest reserves in the world, after Saudi Arabia. It can be pumped out at a fraction of the cost of Alaska oil, a mere drop in the bucket as far as the future is concerned. It only costs pennies to pump oil in Iraq. As soon as it becomes the 51st State — and faces a long colonial occupation, Exxon, Shell, Big Oil, will move in and update the neglected infrastructure there, with the result that the oil price will collapse, flooding a depressed world market.

Two things are happening simultaneously: The first involves the U.S.A. approach to international and national security in dealing with Iraq and the war on terrorism. The second involves its domestic and political policies as they face a war and a weak economy at the same time.

FIRST THE WAR: IT creates uncertainty. It will cost a lot of money and the aftermath is not known. What if Saddam, who faces certain death, does what he did in Kuwait, where he set 500 oil wells on fire prior to retreating? Now, with his back to the wall and with nothing to lose, he may throw all he has on Saudi Arabia, where 70 per cent of the oil comes from.

This is the Middle East, where the Scorpion has considerable sting, one that may sink the world economy dependent on its oil. Once the Islamic world is invaded, which way will Iran go? And Saudi Arabia, who has refused the Americans to use their bases? And will Al Qaeda reassert itself the moment the despised Americans have invaded their territory?

So when war breaks out — sometime after the New Year — we may see drastic changes in security, also in Canada, with border crossings and travel restrictions. We — my wife and I — have plans to go to San Diego and Los Angeles in late February, just about the time the war will be at its peak. Will we be able to travel?

Wars are always unpredictable. We may have to consider drastic reductions in civilian energy use

and flying, as airplanes use about 10 per cent of all the refined fuel.

THE SECOND DANGER IS the economy. We will see much higher defense outlays, in Canada, but primarily in the U.S.A., where the budget in one year had gone from a \$250 billion surplus to a \$150 billion deficit. And that is only the beginning. Wars have a tendency to get out of hand.

The U.S.A. needs \$1 billion each day of foreign funds to balance its trade deficit. If the war does not go according to plan, reluctant Europe and neutral Japan will refuse to throw good money after bad, and this might drive down the value of the dollar.

Since 1950 consumer and corporate debt has doubled to 90 per cent of income. Just as in 1928. What we see today resembles that situation more than ever: this means that, unless everything is a cake walk, unless suddenly Saddam surrenders peacefully and unless the American public keeps on spending and buying and living beyond their means, and thus prosperity returns with a vengeance [which is impossible given the state of the environment which cannot tolerate an extended war or more greenhouse gases], we are in for trouble.

You may remember General Anthony Zinni. About two years ago President Bush sent this retired Marine General to the Middle East to broker a peace between Sharon and Arafat. For awhile his stocky figure and bulldog face appeared on TV every night. He was a Marine company commander in Vietnam and also a general in charge of America's intervention in Somalia. A few weeks ago he delivered the keynote speech at the annual meeting of the Middle East Institute. In his talk he outlined the 10 best conditions for the Iraqi war: In short he said we need:

- (1) A UN coalition.
- (2) A short war.
- (3) Little destruction.
- (4) Israel not involved.
- (5) The streets quiet — no anti-American backlash.
- (6) Iraqi remaining orderly.
- (7) The after-war repair shared.
- (8) The change-over orderly.
- (9) The Military not stuck in Iraq.
- (10) Other commitments met.

He then elaborated on each point and at the conclusion of his speech he wondered on what planet the White House lives to undertake such a dangerous venture for no particularly valid reason. Said he:

"I spent 39 years resorting to the gun. More often than not it makes the conditions worse."

What he recommends for the

region is a sort of Marshall plan, a comprehensive structure to help the Middle East region economically, politically and socially, and transform it to adjust to modernity. He concludes that success will have to be measured not in military terms but in what is left behind as a new political entity.

The main argument in historian Paul Kennedy's book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* is that nothing is more dependent on prosperity than the armed forces. Military power is only possible and can only endure when it rests upon adequate supplies of wealth, based on a flourishing productive base, fueled by healthy finances.

Today the U.S. military forces are unequaled in the world. They are the product of decades of tremendous prosperity. Now, however, the bubble has burst, and the strong base that has made possible the building of many 10-billion-dollar aircraft carriers and two-billion-dollar B2 bombers, has eroded. U.S. finances, its internal budget deficits, its external foreign debt, are in deep disarray. The economy has over-capacity, unemployment is rising, the cost of medical care is out of control, the stock market highly vulnerable with wild swings daily, the consumer deeply worried. They are in a top heavy situation.

THE COSTLY MILITARY totally depends on a healthy economic basis. It now threatens to sink the entire world economy, with both Germany and Japan already in a deflationary recession. The Netherlands fought Spain from 1568-1648. This war cost Spain so much that it forever faded away as a world power. The British Empire a century ago seemed destined to rule the waves forever. Its global commitments outstripped its capacity to carry them out.

Now the U.S.A., as inheritor of a vast array of self-imposed strategical obligations, is alone to wage a World War against the very sources from which it derives its wealth. Walter Cronkite sees an Iraq as the beginning of WW III.

Perhaps you should invite me back in, say, six months, to see whether I have just uttered a bunch of nonsense, or whether my words were truly prophetic. Remember: this is the Middle East, the place where throughout the last 5,000 years the major battles for the control of human history have been fought. Civilization started there. Will it end there as well?

P.S. I was invited back.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont.

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Anniversaries

1952 December 21 2002
With thankfulness to the Lord for the many blessings He has given to our family, we look forward to celebrating with our parents and grandparents.

ADAM and ANNEKE VANDERVELDE (nee Stienstra)

the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. We pray that God may bless them with continued health and happiness.

An open house will be held in their honor on December 21, 2002, D.V. from 2 - 4 p.m. in the Lions Hall, Beachburg Ontario.

Love and congratulations from Hessel & Audrey VanderVelde

Mandy, Shawn, Tyler

Arnold & Jill VanderVelde

Justin, Derek, Christie

John & Theresa Van Manen

Tim, Kimberly, Jamie

Home Address:

1715 Beachburg Rd

P.O. Box 342

Beachburg, ON K0J 1C0

1962 December 14 2002

WARNER and ELISABETH BOER (Buesink)

We wish to give praise and thanks for the inspiration and example you have been as parents and grandparents. With love from your children and grandchildren.

Harry John (deceased 1963)

Harry & Faith - Carleen, Taylor, Rebecca - Hamilton, ON

Jeff & Jayne - Samantha, Jacob Dunnville, ON

Robert & Ken - Asheville, NC

Jonathan - Alexander, Kyrsten, Megan & Christine (fiancée) Chatham, ON

An open house will be held from 1:30 to 4:00 on December 14th at Parkview Meadows, Townsend

Home Address: 26 Elm St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 3B3

Best Wishes Only



Anniversaries

1962 December 19 2002
Zuidwolde, DR. Gowanstown, ON

With thanksgiving and praise to God for His faithfulness

HANS and FENNIE KATERBURG (nee Zijlstra)

hope to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary, along with their children and grandchildren.

John & Jennifer

Joel, Nathan, Eric, Kevin
Pieter & Laura
Erin, Nicole, Justin, Adam
Alex

Theo & Jennifer

There will be an open house held at Listowel Christian School on Saturday, December 21st from 2 until 4 p.m. No gifts please. Donations to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank welcome. Home Address: R.R. 1, Gowanstown, ON N0G 1Y0



1952 December 28 2002
DIXIE BRAMPTON

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS
With joy and thanksgiving, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents

KAREL KUYVENHOVEN and TRUIS KUYVENHOVEN-GRIFFIOEN

On Dec 28, 2002, open house will be from 2:00 till 4:00 p.m. at the Second CRC in Brampton, Ont., 444 Steele's Ave W.

Thankful children and grandchildren: James Kuyvenhoven,

Karl, Ben Huttonville, ON
Margaret & Frank Rheebergen,

Sarah, Heidi, Micah, Jodi Smithers, B.C.

Corry & Kae's Vanderkooy

Miriam and fiancée, Todd Carolyn, Joanna, Angela Peterborough ON

Henry Kuyvenhoven

Tim Lelystad, Holland

Andrew & Mary Kuyvenhoven, Kristina, Peter, Michael Huttonville, ON

Vincent & Janna Kuyvenhoven

Ryan, Christopher, Karlee Orland Park, Illinois, USA

Home address: 9188 Heritage Rd., R.R. #2, Norval ON L0P 1K0

1952 December 7 2002
"Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain"
(Ps. 127:1 a)

WIEGER (BILL) and JOHANNA (JOOP) STELPSTRA (nee Renkema)

Dear Omi & Opi, Joop & Bill, Mom & Dad.

We're so glad. That on this day.

We can say,

Congratulations on 50 years of whispering in each other's ears

"You are my sweetheart"!!!

Mom and Dad, We're so glad

That you two, Said "I do"

And for all your wedded bliss

We think you deserve a kiss

Go ahead you two

You must stop to woo!

We have confessed
That our God has blessed
Your union from the start
And we "hopes" and we "prays"
He'll give many more days
In this life

As husband and wife!!!

Love, Lynne & Ed and kids

Congratulations from all your children and grandchildren

David & Nancy Stelpstra - Guelph, ON

Joel - Ottawa, ON

Cameron - Guelph, ON

Ted & Sara Stelpstra - Sarnia, ON

Britney - Calvin College

Jordan, Dylan

Robert Stelpstra - Quebec City, QC

Nelinda (Lynne) & Ed Vandenberg - Houston, BC

Lauren, Taylor, Maggie & Jonas

An open house will be held in Mom & Dad's honor, D.V., on Sat., Dec. 28, 2002, from 2 - 4 p.m., at Parkview Meadows, 72 Townsend Dr., Townsend, Ont. Best wishes only, please! Home address: 150 Oak St., Unit 2, Simcoe, ON N3Y 5M5

Ph 519-426-1687



1952 December 14 2002
SID and ANJE BUMA

"And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us." Eph 5:2a

To celebrate 50 years of marriage, their children and grandchildren would like to honour them with your presence at an Open House on Friday, December 13th from 8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. at Stonechurch Winery, Irvine Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Best wishes only please.

Home Address:
1128 Vansickle Rd. Unit 235
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3W1



Obituaries

On Oct 30/02, seven weeks after being diagnosed with cancer, the Lord in His wisdom took home our beloved wife, mom & grandma

SWANNY ERINGA-BIJMA

"The Lord bless you and keep you"

Num 6:24

Her life began 74 years ago in Utrecht, Fr. It ended peacefully with her family by her side in Woodstock, ON. She was the wife of Fred Eringa for 51 1/2 years. She will always be loved and remembered by

Cathy & Russ Highfield - Mark, Lisa Wilma & Carl Klein-Geltink - Chris, Darryl, Nathan, Michelle

Sylvia & Stewart Van Scheven

Kevin & Rachel, Sarah, Nicholas

Martha Vanschepen - Ben, Levi

Edith & Ken Westra - Ashley, David

Correspondence address:

Fred Eringa

147 John Davies Dr

Woodstock, ON N4T 1N1

May 20, 1925 November 12, 2002
Zaandam, The Netherlands Lacombe, AB

On November 12, 2002, the Lord in His wisdom and at His time took to Himself our beloved husband, father and grandfather

TEERD (TED) KRAAY

"O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you." Psalm 84:12

Dear Husband of Alice (nee Woldhuis) for 52 years. Dear Father and Opa of Irene Kraay - Burnaby, BC

Agnes & Harv Prins - Lacombe, AB

Cindy, Steve, Keith, Brian

Ed & Linda Kraay - Lacombe, AB

Jesse and Shelley, Reuben, Matt, Amanda

Janet & Phil Ryskamp - Calgary, AB

Michelle, Tim, Dan

Wilma & Gord Spelt - Lacombe, AB

Randy, Jason, Becky

Dear Brother of Margaret Valk, Tries VanZaane, Janet Brinkman, Simon Kraay, Hildebrand Kraay, and Bernard Kraay. Dear uncle of many nieces and nephews. Correspondence address:

4814 55th Ave

Lacombe, AB T4L 1T7

Nov. 23, 1926 Nov. 13, 2002

"Saved by Grace"

RIEMKE "IRENE" FLIKWEERT at the age of 75 years, after a fruitful Christian life characterized by continual love, support and kindness, went home to be with her Lord, on November 13, 2002. Survived by her dear and loving husband of 51 years, Peter Cornelis Wiss and caring mother of Joanne Van Eyk & husband Keith, Dan & wife Hetty.

George & wife Janet, Peter & wife Helen, Wilma Rustenburg & husband Paul, Irene Hooyer & husband Glen, twenty-three grandchildren and one great-grandson. Also survived by three sisters and three brothers. Predeceased by one granddaughter, two sisters and a brother. Funeral service was held on November 16, at the First Christian Reformed Church in Chatham with Pastor Paul Stadt officiating.

Correspondence address:

P. Flikweert, 40 Elm St., Apt. 222

Chatham, ON N7M 6A5.

It is with comfort that Mom has been relieved from her suffering and is now rejoicing in the presence of the Lord.

The interment took place at Mountlawn Memorial Gardens in Whitby and a memorial service was held at Holland Christian Homes in Brampton on Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2002.

Correspondence to:

Eilen & John Van Til, 1636 Borden St., London, ON, N5W 2R4

CHRISTIAN COURIER

Classifieds



Obituaries

Oct. 31, 1926 Nov. 10, 2002
 Kollumerwaag Smithers, B.C.
 Friesland Canada
 "Be still and know that I am God"
 Psalm 46:10
 Suddenly, in His time, God has taken
 home our dear husband, father and
 grandfather

BILL BRANDSMA
 Bill is survived by his loving wife Rena (deBoer), (predeceased by his first wife Gerdy Bearda in 1968 and by his granddaughter, Lysa Terpstra (July 2002). He was dearly loved and will be greatly missed by his children and grandchildren.

Sylvia & Sid Terpstra -Abbotsford, BC
 Karla & Bryan Cornelius, Lysa (+),
 Jenna, Courtney

George & Tina Veenstra -Smithers BC
 Jason, Brad, Kevin, Stan, Daniel
Al & Rosalie Brandsma -Smithers, BC
 Nicole, Michelle, Ashlee, Travis
Mel & Sandra Brandsma-Red Deer AB
 Jordyn, Stacey, Kiera
Edna & Dave VanWerkhoven
 Fraser Lake, BC
 Kyla

Sid Brandsma - Edmonton, AB
 Hilda & Kevin deWolde - Abbotsford
 Richard Brandsma - Edmonton, AB
 Also survived by two brothers and
 four sisters all in Holland.

The memorial service took place on
 Nov. 14, 2002 at the Smithers Christian
 Reformed Church with Pastor Jim
 Poelman officiating.

Correspondence address:
 Rena Brandsma
 R.R. #2 Telkwa High Road
 Smithers, B.C. V0J 2N0

February 7, 1916 - August 20, 2002
 Psalm 1 16: 15
 The Lord took unto Himself His child.

FOLKERT (FRED) POSTMA
 Much loved husband for almost
 47 years of Geertje (Grace) Postma
 (nee Beers). Predeceased by his first
 wife Ietske Feenstra, daughter Kay
 Andringa and sons-in-law Pete Hofing
 and Mike Fokkens.

Loving Father and father-in-law of:
 Lita Hofing
 Athens, ON

Edith and Andy Veerman
 Lansdown, ON
 Garry and Brenda Postma
 Carlton Place, ON
 Tom and Lucille Postma
 Laveck, ON
 Gordon and Ali Postma
 Addison, ON
 Karen and Bill Winkelhorst (Fokkens)
 Brighton, ON

Cathie and Ben Wagger
 Dunnville, ON
 Ted & Diane Postma
 Wainfleet, ON

Annette and Clarence Vander Heide
 Vineland, ON
 Jeff and Patty Postma
 Bracebridge, ON

Dear Pak of 38 grandchildren and
 numerous great-grandchildren.
 Funeral service was held August 23,
 2002 in Vineland Free Reformed
 Church, Ontario, with Rev. Schouls
 presiding.

Correspondence address: 206-2
 White St., St. Catharines, ON L2N 1Z2

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905-937-6302

Email: kgerritsma@beaconchristian.org

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- be familiar with Desktop Publishing;
- have good organizational skills;
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Attn: Mr. Jim Vreugdenhill - Director of Elementary Education



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See website for job description and application process

www.cpj.ca

Deadline: December 6



**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
 (CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER)**

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

The Christian Reformed Church in North America, due to the scheduled retirement of Mr. Kenneth J. Horjus, is seeking potential candidates for the position of Director of Finance and Administrative Support Services. The function is equivalent to a Chief Financial Officer position with overall responsibility for the financial management of the denomination and several of its administrative support departments. The position reports to the executive director of ministries. Anticipated starting date is June 1, 2003.

A position description is available upon request. Further information can be obtained by contacting one of the persons listed below. If you are suggesting a possible candidate or desire to be considered, please mail your letter or resume to Mr. Waanders.

Dr. Peter Borgdorff

Executive Director of Ministries

2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49560

800.272-5125 or 616.224.0832

borgdorp@crena.org

Mr. William L. Waanders

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Job Opportunities

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**Ms. Deb Douma, chairperson
 Administrative Search Committee**
 82 McLaughlin Road St.
 Brampton, ON L6Y 2C7
 Tel: 905-874-9713
 Fax: 905-451-7604
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 Sue Kikkert at:
suekikkert@hotmail.com
 or call 905-957-7766
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 1-519-291-1013 or
 e-mail: jhofstee@micro-man.com

Miscellaneous

Wanted: Female Roommate to share main floor of house in Brampton. 350/m incl. Call: 905-452-4406

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Julius de Jager, PACS Curriculum Coordinator
 9125 - 50 Street,
 Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2H3
 Phone: 1-780-469-9653 Fax: 1-780-469-9880
 E-Mail: pacs@kingsu.ab.ca

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A church profile and further details are available on request. If you have any questions contact us at:

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 e-mail Pastor Mike Vandyk, mvandyk@telusplanet.net

Miscellaneous

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**Campaign Director
 Campaign Program Officer
 Campaign Assistant**

For details on each of these jobs, check out the quicklinks for employment opportunities on our website at www.redeemer.on.ca

Please direct inquiries to the Human Resources Director
 Redeemer University College
 777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4
 Tel: 905-648-2131 x4230

Applicants are encouraged to fax or email their application materials.
 FAX: 905-648-2134

E-mail: jvgeest@redeemer.on.ca

All serious replies are appreciated. However, only candidates invited for interviews will be contacted.



REDEEMER
 University College

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Nov 30 - Tillsonburg CRC 25th Anniversary. For event info contact Marg Kriense Lokker 519-877-2519 or e-mail john.lokker@sympatico.ca

Dec. 1 Handel's Messiah performed by the Arcady Singers & Orchestra, 7:30 p.m. Willowdale CRC, 70 Hilda Av. Willowdale, ON Tickets \$15 & \$10. For info and tickets call Te Deum Music at 416-250-7702.

Dec 14 Pro Musica Choir of Burlington, Brent Fifield, conductor. Christmas Concert: Hodie Christus Natus Est. 8:30 p.m. 3132 South Dr. Burlington, ON. Bruce Kirkpatrick-Hill - organ. Rudy Neufeld - Baritone soloist. \$10 Family rate \$30. \$2 more at the door. Ph. 905-632-1347

Dec 14 Christmas Concert - CAMBRIDGE- Maranatha Christian Reformed Church @ 7:30 p.m. Adults \$10, Students \$6, Children under 12, FREE. Call 519-623-8151 See ad this issue

Dec 17 Christmas Concert - BOWMANVILLE- Maranatha CRC @ 8 p.m. Call 905-623-7196 for tickets. See ad this issue.

Dec 21 Christmas Concert - WILLOWDALE Willowdale United Church @ 7:30 p.m. Call the OCMA 416-636-9779. See ad this issue.

Dec 22 Hollandse Kerst Dienst Zion CRC Oshawa, ON. 2:30 p.m. Pastor Tuyt preaching. Refreshments. See ad this issue.

Dec. 27 Music and Song for the KING - Ambassadors Christian Mail Choir - Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Catharines 7:30 p.m. See ad Dec. 16 issue

Dec 29 Music and Song for the KING - Ambassadors Christian Mail Choir - MacNab St. Presbyterian Church, Hamilton 7:30 p.m. For more details, see ad Dec. 16 issue.

Jan 17 Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at First CRC, 181 Charlton Ave, Hamilton. Sponsored by World Wide Christian Schools. Freewill offering. (905) 765-5623

Jan 18 Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, 130 Scugog St., Bowmanville. Freewill offering (519) 637-4357

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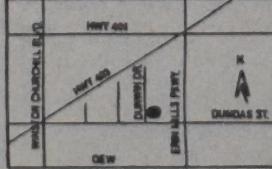
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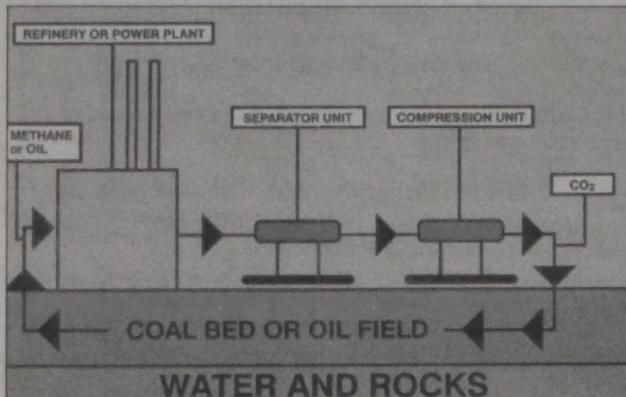
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News

Alberta company offers solutions to greenhouse gas pollution



ILLUSTRATIONS (2) COURTESY GREENHOUSE GAS SEPARATION SYSTEMS, INC.

A diagram showing how the Cerenzie Process works.

Alan Doerksen

RED DEER, Alta. — Although the Alberta government is harshly critical of the Kyoto Protocol, one Alberta company is offering solutions which could dramatically cut pollution levels in that province, while at the same time increasing production of oil and natural gas from Western Canada's tar sands.

Greenhouse Gas Separation Systems, Inc. (GGSS) — a company based in Edmonton — has developed a system that cleans gases produced by the oil industry, separating carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane while releasing oxygen and nitrogen. When used in oil production, the captured carbon dioxide may be reused as a process gas to enhance oil recovery. Carbon dioxide can be stored and then pumped into tar sands or coal beds to improve production of oil and coal. Methane (natural gas) can also be captured and stored.

Invented by GGSS founder Albert Cerenzie, the system (called the Cerenzie Process) was initially developed as a handling system for waste gases from the oil and gas industry. But the process also has potential applications in electricity generation, sawmill operations, landfills, large-scale hog farming and mushroom growing, reports the company.

Critical of Klein

Besides inventing the new process, Albert Cerenzie is the founder and president of GGSS. He is critical of Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's opposition to the Kyoto Protocol (which calls for Canada and other countries to cut back sharply on pollution levels). Klein opposes Kyoto "because big business in Alberta controls Alberta," asserts Cerenzie, in an interview with *Christian Courier*. Klein has

said he has no scientific proof that Alberta's oil industry is causing serious pollution. But Cerenzie compares that to cigarette companies saying "Your smoking won't kill you."

Cerenzie much prefers Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's stance on Kyoto. "What Chrétien is doing is trying to open up an avenue we can follow," he observes. "We have to give people like Chrétien time to put together a good deal. We need to have all the provinces onboard. Chrétien is opening a door for our younger generation to have a greener planet."

From Cerenzie's point of view, "Chrétien's not doing this for any legacy.... Chrétien wants a greener country. Klein wants to pollute more.... [and is] focusing on how much money he can make by the end of the day."

Industry won't suffer

Cerenzie supports new federal programs which encourage industries to clean up their act. "The federal government is putting in place a program to help industry. Industry will not suffer," he asserts. Instead, industries that come onboard will get "instant money from the federal government."

In contrast, the Klein government has refused to help fund his company's work, despite several applications. Cerenzie questions the validity of consultation groups Klein has set up to study the costs of cleaning up greenhouse gases. When Cerenzie spoke to such a group, he explained, "Your information is wrong and outdated." The group had pegged the cost of separating greenhouse gases produced by oil production at \$25 to \$50 per metric tonne, but Cerenzie said his company could do that work for only about \$15 per tonne.

Expanding fast

GGSS is currently working with Shell Canada in Edmonton on greenhouse gas cleanup. Several Alberta-based oil and gas exploration and production companies have also expressed an interest in using GGSS's separation process.

In the past few months, new opportunities have also opened for the company to work on projects in China and Australia. "It's expanded quite fast," observes Cerenzie. "We look on it as a Canadian and global industry." Currently, the company has offices in Red Deer and Edmonton, Alta., and in Houston, Texas, but the company plans to open offices in each Canadian province in the near future.

Not bad for a company that got started in 1997. "In 1994, I started the development of the research and technology," explains Cerenzie.

He says that his company's technology can separate carbon dioxide from oil industry waste gases, and then pump it into oil fields in a process similar to carbonation, to produce millions of barrels of extra oil from the Alberta fields. "What we do is go to industrial sites and recapture 100 per cent of their emissions," explains Cerenzie.

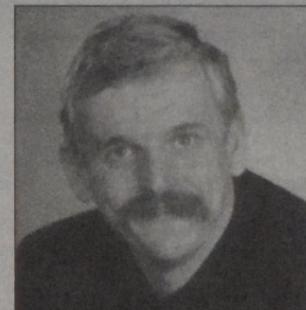
This can be a real plus in a province where many people are complaining about the deadly effects of flaring — a process by which oil companies burn and release waste chemicals into the atmosphere.

A real breakthrough

GGSS's technology could prove to be a real breakthrough in cutting industrial pollution levels in Canada. Cerenzie notes, "There have been a lot of new technologies developed, but they're sitting on the shelf." Federal programs such as PERRL (the Pilot Emission Removals, Reductions and Learnings Initiative) will help get those technologies off the shelf, Cerenzie believes.

"That will enhance job production and make Canada a greener country." PERRL is a project of Environment Canada, launched this year, which plans to provide funds to provincial and municipal governments, private companies and non-governmental organizations for carbon dioxide capture and storage, and renewable energy, and to assist new climate change products.

Cerenzie also notes that companies which reduce carbon dioxide emissions can get carbon dioxide credits, which are worth about



Garfield Marks, GGSS's corporate government liaison.

\$15 per metric tonne, and which can be sold to other companies and municipalities.

Garfield Marks, GGSS's corporate government liaison, has been vocal in promoting the profile of his company and the Kyoto Protocol, through letters to the editors of various newspapers. In a letter to *The Hill Times*, Marks wrote: "The Weyburn oil fields in Saskatchewan are importing carbon dioxide from the U.S. at a cost that will exceed a billion dollars over 20 years.... GGSS could remove a hundred million tons of carbon dioxide from Canadian industries and power plants for that same billion." That injected carbon dioxide is expected to produce an extra 10,000 barrels of oil a day in Weyburn, reports Cerenzie.

"In Alberta they are taking fresh water out of the ecosystem to flood oilfields, to increase oil production, 276 billion litres in permits last year alone. Why not use the carbon dioxide from local industries instead?... Many of us in the oilfield know the technology is there, waiting for mandatory usage. Ratify Kyoto and you will be surprised how quickly industry will be able to comply."

In a letter to the online *See* magazine, Marks wrote: "Health experts have stated that every tonne of carbon dioxide released into our atmosphere costs Canadians \$16 in health-related costs. There are consumers of carbon dioxide willing to pay for the carbon dioxide, adding to the benefits. Mathematics would show a net profit...."

Like Cerenzie, Marks compares the Alberta government's opposition to Kyoto to tobacco companies defending smoking as being harmless.

Cerenzie is a Catholic and believes God has guided him in building his business, "My belief is the Lord is leading me in this direction.... I wouldn't have gotten this far without the boss above."

News Digest

Dog ate the ballot

PIERRE, South Dakota (AP) — The dog didn't eat Bob Sahr's homework, but it did something close. Sahr, who recently ran for the local Public Utilities Commission, said one of the family dogs got to his wife's absentee ballot and chewed it up.

Sahr's wife was pregnant, and her delivery date was close to the Nov. 5 election, so she got an absentee ballot in the mail. But the dog got to it before she did.

Not the act of a best friend, perhaps, but Sahr is looking on the bright side. "The dog didn't vote for me, but he didn't vote for my opponent, either," he said.

Expensive sandwich

ATLANTA, Georgia (Atlanta) — A radio station in Atlanta is auctioning off a half-eaten turkey sandwich belonging to Mariah Carey.

DJ Jeff Dauler from Q100 has placed the sandwich, complete with salad, pickle and garnish, in a "handy deli box." The winning bidder will also receive a plastic knife used by one of her handlers in order to inspect it, reports the *Mirror*.

But Dauler has warned listeners that the sandwich should not be considered safe to eat, as it has not been refrigerated since Mariah's visit to the studio earlier this week. He said: "This sandwich is a collector's item, for the true Mariah memorabilia collector."

Bids so far have topped \$230.

Speaking pig language

TORONTO — Norwegian farmer Arne Braut "has hit upon an unorthodox method of keeping his hogs happy and improving their lives and his business," report the *Aftenposten* and *Globe and Mail* newspapers. "He gains their trust and speaks their language."

At feeding time, Braut puts on a rubber pig mask and exchanges grunts with his swine. "The pigs used to squeal and run away when we came in," he said. "Now they are calm and come up to me right away. The change is incredible." He hopes this will translate into weight gains in the slaughterhouse.

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